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# **Logics of Foreign Policy**

Discourse, Fantasy and Germany's Policies in the Iraq Crisis

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*Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university. The thesis contains no work published elsewhere.



## **Abstract**

The thesis develops a discourse-theoretical framework for foreign policy analysis and utilises it to account for Germany's policies in the Iraq crisis of 2002/2003. Germany's response was deeply contradictory, as it included rhetorical opposition to the war and diplomatic activities aiming at blocking it, but also tacit and indirect cooperation with the United States that made the war possible. Intriguingly, such policies were pursued against the background of an existential and emotional discourse, which portrayed Germany's very identities as at stake. This intersection of affectivity and contradictoriness presents the research problem of the thesis. To address it, the dissertation revisits the concepts of discourse, subjectivity and foreign policy. Building on poststructuralist and psychoanalytical impulses, it argues that the focus on discursivity should be complemented with a deeper analysis of affect. The subject is reconceptualised as incomplete and split; not only between her different identities, but also between her discursive and affective sides. Foreign policy is then understood as an articulatory practice through which subjects attempt to recapture their identity, a process that is strongly affective and ultimately futile. These arguments are operationalised with the help of three sets of logics: social logics, which capture sedimented aspects of social reality; political logics, which focus on contestation of orders and symbolic reconstruction of political spaces; and the logic of fantasy, which accounts for the subjects' attachment to sociopolitical orders. After discussing methodological problems, the dissertation turns to the empirical study of Germany's policies in the Iraq crises, which is structured around the three types of logics. The key conclusion is that Germany's policymakers operated in a discursively and affectively disordered terrain, in which their own subjectivities were split between different identities, principles and expectations. They were unable to resolve these dilemmas, because, at the same time, multiple of the contradictory identities and policy options were underpinned by strong affective investment, which made it virtually impossible to choose an unequivocal course of action. This inability also functioned as a reminder of the failure to secure a stable and complete identity, further fueling the desire for it that was manifested in the perpetuation of the existential and emotional discourse.

## List of Abbreviations

ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten
BND	Bundesnachrichtendienst
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CSU	Christian Social Union
EU	European Union
FAZ	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
FDP	Free Democratic Party
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IR	International Relations
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDS	Party of Democratic Socialism
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany
SZ	Süddeutsche Zeitung
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USA	United States of America
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen

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# 1 | Introduction

As the invasion army under the US leadership was attacking Iraq on 20 March 2003, Germany's chancellor Gerhard Schröder appeared on the TV screen to address the nation – and he did so in a rather untypical manner. Instead of his usual confident and combative style, Schröder was calm, almost humble and rather statesmanlike. Leaving his masculine image aside, he acknowledged that he was 'deeply moved' by the support that his opposition to the war enjoyed both in Germany and abroad (Schröder 2003d). He reiterated his objections, regretted that "[t]he logic of war prevailed over the chances of peace" and expected that this would lead to the suffering of thousands of people. However, in contrast to his confrontational attitude from the previous months, he chose a conciliatory tone towards the United States: the 'substance' of the German-American relationship was untouched by the 'differences' over Iraq. Intriguingly, while Schröder was praising peace from the screen, Germany's territory was being used by the US air forces to facilitate and execute the attack, the German Bundeswehr was patrolling the very bases from which the war was being orchestrated and German secret services were passing war-related intelligence to their American counterparts. Therefore, Germany's position on the Iraq war was far from simply 'saying no' to the Americans. Rather than presenting a principled choice in the name of the 'courage to peace' that Schröder was so keen to talk about, it was incoherent, inconsistent and contradictory.

However, there is more to the case, which becomes visible as soon as we contextualise Germany's perplexing policies against the background of the public debate from the previous months. What is apparent from the very beginning is that the discussions were not really about the dangers of Saddam Hussein, interpretations of international law or the pros and cons of attacking Iraq. Rather than that, it was the existential issues of Germany's very identity and the principles governing her foreign policy, of responsibility for the sins of the past and towards the rest of the world, of Germany's supposed duty and the country's very belonging within the Western or European communities that were the main points of contention. What was at stake were the very central questions of social life. Who are we? Who do we want to be? Where do we come from? Where do we go? Given the importance of these issues for our understanding of the self and the other as well as for our ordering of the world, it is not surprising that the responses were often uncompromising and strongly emotional.

The story becomes even more intriguing when these two issues are juxtaposed. Inconsistent policies could perhaps be explained as resulting from differences within the government,

opportunistic rational choices vis-à-vis different audiences or simply as bad practice. The role of identity and, albeit to a much lesser extent, also the emotionality of the debate are accounted for by the argument that foreign policy is a tool through which the self is distinguished from the other (Campbell 1998). However, how can we deal with a situation when contradictory policies meet with existential and emotional discourses? How can we explain Germany's inconsistent and contradictory policies in the context of absolute claims with respect to identity, history etc. within which they were articulated? And conversely, how can we explain the existential and emotional nature of the debate as long as the actual policies were equivocal and, as I will show, there was actually notable common ground between the rival positions?

These questions outline the initial puzzle that drives this dissertation. They are analytically relevant, as they present surprising and counterintuitive insights. We usually think about foreign policies as clear and unequivocal. Therefore, more than a decade after the Iraq war, the dominant political, journalistic and academic narrative is simply that Germany 'said no'. Many different explanations are provided, some of which will be discussed later, but very few of them focus on the discrepancies between the hardly commensurable policies that were decided and implemented simultaneously. Similarly, foreign policies are typically analysed as devoid of emotions or passions: either as rational calculation of national interests, or, in critical accounts, as technologies for manufacturing consent through the symbolic reconstruction of political communities. Nevertheless, the debate on Iraq shows that the affective aspects of politics needs to be taken into account as well, which has been happening only recently and very rarely in studies dealing directly with foreign policy. The intersection of affectivity and contradictoriness opens a broader research agenda, which challenges the notions of actorness that we usually rely on in thinking about foreign policy.

The questions are relevant also politically as they speak to problems that matter beyond the confines of the ivory tower. Few would disagree that the Iraq war was one of the defining events of our time, one which still serves as a resource for constructing political identities in Europe as well as in the United States. Digging deep into the case and uncovering the discrepancies, ambiguities and tensions is therefore also a critical enterprise, as it can help us confront and destabilise how Iraq is being used to justify present and future policies. While focusing on the foreign policies of a nation state with respect to military intervention may sound too traditional and narrow-minded to many in the critical corner of social research, it is difficult to argue that these issues are no longer salient. Over the last decade, we have witnessed intervention debates about Iran, Libya, Mali, Sudan, Syria and, once again, Iraq. Discussions are led and decisions taken in matters concerning the life and death of whole populations. In all of them, the example of Iraq casts a long shadow. Moreover, the problems

of inconsistency and affectivity speak to a broader array of political issues. Contradictory decisions are increasingly common, since politicians have to justify themselves to different audiences. This often puts them in an impossible position, in which they are torn between opposing forces, e.g. between international partners and domestic societies. With respect to affectivity, what appeared to be a somewhat exotic issue only a few years ago now seems to have returned with full force with the rise of populism, nationalism and xenophobia that is discernible throughout the Western world. To address policy contradictions and the rise of affective politics, we need to be able to understand them. The project of this thesis, therefore, is both explanatory and political.

## **Contributions**

The importance of the Iraq war is reflected also in the vast amount of literature devoted to it, making it a rather over-analysed problem. This is true also for Germany's foreign policy on Iraq, which is seen as one of the key ingredients in the making of the crisis and often also as a turning point through which Germany emancipated herself from her dependence on the United States. The books and articles dealing with the issue, usually in the broader contexts of Germany's post-1990 foreign policy, would fill a few shelves. It would be difficult to contribute with new empirical insights, at least until the archives are opened and sensitive materials declassified. However, this is not the ambition here, as this is not a historiographical thesis. Instead, I offer a novel interpretation based on reading the events through a different analytical grid that is constructed through creative encounters with multiple literatures from which this thesis takes inspiration and to which it, in turn, contributes.

Closest to the empirical interest is the literature on Germany's foreign policy. This scholarship has a lot to offer in terms of insights into the societal, cultural or biographical background of German policymaking. However, it is limited by its narrow theoretical scope. Most of the studies adopt what I will call the soft-constructivist consensus. Crafting their accounts in opposition to American neorealism, they acknowledge the role of cultures, ideas and identities and broadly agree that actors participate in the construction of their social realities. However, they are reluctant to follow this argument to its ontological and epistemological implications. Instead, 'constructivist' phenomena like cultures or identities are seen as competing against the more 'material' issues of economic incentives or security interests. Typically, the analytical strategy is to weigh these factors against each other according to procedures that follow the ideals of positivist science. In contrast, there are very few explicitly post-positivist and interpretivist, let alone poststructuralist and discursive

accounts. Therefore, the first contribution of this thesis is in offering novel insights on the Iraq crisis in particular and German foreign policy in general by opting for a different, discourse-theoretical perspective, thereby also bringing diversity to a debate dominated by traditional approaches.

However, this thesis is not only about the particularities of Germany's position in the Iraq crisis. While it speaks to the field of German studies, it identifies predominantly with International Relations (IR), provided IR is understood as a loose field held together by institutional socialisation rather than a scientific method or an undisputed set of research objects. While paying attention to particular problems, the central ambition of IR has always been to draw generalisations valid beyond and across particular contexts. Following this ambition, I am using Germany also as a springboard to say something about the broader trends and features of foreign policy in the current international order. This brings me in dialogue with another broad literature, that of IR theory in general and foreign policy theory in particular.

It has to be clarified that I do not offer a comprehensive overview and do not engage with different IR schools and arguments. This has been done before and there is no need to repeat the exercise. Instead, I start already from the perspective of poststructuralist and discursive theorising. These strands of thought are particularly well-equipped to enlighten key aspects of the puzzle, such as how the Iraq crisis was constructed so as to trigger a period of existential soul-searching, how Germany's identities, histories and principles were constituted in the discourse and how these were connected to foreign policies. Similar problems have been addressed in a number of well-known studies, which will be discussed extensively. While presenting the starting point for my thinking about foreign policy, the existing discursive work in IR is limited in two respects. In its structural focus, it struggles to account for particular policy decisions. In its emphasis on meaning and the symbolic aspects of social life, it neglects or backgrounds the affective dimension of politics. The second contribution of this thesis lies in incorporating the problems of affect and decision into discursive theorising of foreign policy, thereby providing a fresh and more comprehensive perspective.

While this thesis builds upon and speaks to IR debates, it also constantly traverses disciplinary boundaries. The issues of decisions and affects are by no means limited to the area of foreign policy, as they open questions relevant across a number of different contexts. To conceptualise these problems, as well as their relations to more familiar categories like discourse, practice, power or agency, the thesis engages also with the literature within postfoundationalist social and political theory, predominantly with what is known as the

‘Essex School’ of discourse theory. This body of work, building above all on the intellectual legacy of Jacques Lacan, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, provides refined conceptualisations of discourse, affect and subjectivity that can help us rethink foreign policy in a way that is both theoretically sophisticated and analytically applicable. However, there are still only a few detailed empirical studies building upon these philosophical arguments, especially when it comes to the more recent incorporation of affect in the work of David Howarth, Jason Glynos and Yannis Stavrakakis. With the exception of Ty Solomon (especially Solomon 2015), there are no studies in IR in this vein. The third contribution of this thesis is in helping to close this empirical gap with the hope of feeding back theoretical insights, which can then hopefully enrich the theoretical framework itself.

While speaking also to other debates, e.g. regarding the role of practices, materiality, visibility and ontological security, the thesis is defined above all by the intersection of the three disparate fields of German politics, IR/foreign policy theory and discourse theory. It opens conversations and generates new insights from the often surprising encounters between parts that apparently do not belong together. Offering the metaphor of ‘short circuit’, Žižek asks: “Is not one of the most effective critical procedures to cross wires that do not usually touch: to take a major classic (text, author, notion), and read it in a short-circuiting way, through a ‘minor’ author, text, or conceptual apparatus [...]?” (Žižek 2005b: ix) This is precisely what this thesis does. It takes a problem as classic as the foreign policy of a nation state in an ostensibly well-known case, only to unpack it through the ‘minor’ and often highly controversial optics of psychoanalytically-infused debates about subjectivity, social reality, fantasy, desire and enjoyment. Crucially, the logic of bringing the three fields together is not one of mechanic application, in which rigid and supposedly universal theoretical grids are projected on a particular case. Instead, it is one of articulation, in which contingent relations are constructed between disparate elements, with the effect that all of these elements are somewhat modified as a result of entering the relation (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). In other words, the thesis does not strive to prove the universal merits of psychoanalytically-inspired discourse theory by demonstrating how it illuminates the case in question. It seeks for novel ways of understanding discourse, foreign policy and Germany’s position in the Iraq crisis that are made possible by crossing the wires and reading the three problems together.

### **Outline of the thesis**

The three fields are discernible also in the structure of the thesis, which is otherwise rather conventional and proceeds through the usual steps: literature review, theory construction,



methodological discussion, empirical study. Many authors with similar philosophical commitments as mine would reject this outline due to its grounding in the imaginary of positivist science. However, I do not see such structure as a straightjacket, but rather as a device for communicating my arguments. Adopting a conventional research template allows me not only to tick the usual boxes by condensing my points around the issues typically discussed within mainstream debates. Above all, it enables me to problematise and reconceptualise them: when writing about theory, methodology or the empirical case, I am also asking what ‘theory’, ‘methodology’ or ‘the empirical’ stand for, which role they play in the research process and what their mutual relation is. Again, the logic of binding the different parts together is that of articulation, in which my explanatory narrative emerges only gradually and from the enmeshing and mutual contamination of concepts, methods and different types of data.

In the first step, the thesis defines and maps the three areas, upon which it builds and which it binds together. This is done in Chapter 2, which reviews the literatures on German foreign policy, discursive foreign policy theory and the Essex School of discourse theory. The contributions of these literatures are outlined together with their deficiencies. Elaborating on the argument that was sketched in the previous paragraphs, the chapter digs into the ontological and epistemological assumptions of our thinking about (German) foreign policy. It argues that most of the literature dealing with Germany’s post-Cold War policies is trapped in the binaries of continuity/change and structure/agency. Furthermore, the analyses often provide linear, even teleological narratives that see policies as mere instantiations of broader developments, rather than appreciating their contingent nature. Discursive and poststructuralist thinking about foreign policy promises to overcome these issues. However, the chapter shows that this potential is curtailed by the overtly structural focus of the literature and the resulting inability to account for decisions and interactions.

Chapter 3 steps into the first of the three fields and engages with discourse theory as presented above all by the Essex School. The chapter affirms the key premises of discursive thought, especially the central yet elusive role of meaning in social relations, the structured yet incomplete nature of society, the discursive dependence of the subject and the productive nature of power. However, it also highlights the often neglected role of affect and calls for conceptualising discursivity and affectivity together as two intertwined ontological principles. A detailed discussion is devoted to the subject. The Lacanian subject is radically social, as she constitutes herself only within the order of discourse into which she is ‘thrown’. At the same time, she also escapes and subverts this order due to the affective excess of the body that cannot be signified in discourse. Therefore, the subject is constitutively split between her discursive and affective sides. The reproduction of social

orders as well as resistance to them then stems from the subjective efforts to make sense of the ontological void at the heart of both the social order and the subject herself, which happens through identifications with socially available resources and political projects. The chapter operationalises different dimensions of subjectivity and social reality with the help of three sets of logics, which are presented as the basic explanatory units: social logics, which capture the repetitive and routinised patterns of social life; political logics, which deal with the contestation and reproduction of social orders; and fantasmatic logics, which show how subjects bind themselves to social orders through narrative scenarios that translate affect into discourse. The chapter also discusses the epistemological consequences of these arguments.

Chapter 4 takes the philosophical argument to the field of IR/foreign policy theory in order to reconceptualise foreign policy in a way that is both theoretically robust and analytically useful. It outlines the dilemma between the conventional understanding of foreign policy in terms of external activities of national governments and the poststructuralist focus on foreign policy as a practice through which borders and orders are reconstructed. It shows how a heuristic distinction between sedimented and contested aspects of social orders (along the line between social and political logics) helps us overcome this dilemma and allows us to analyse foreign policy as traditionally defined while simultaneously taking on board the analytical and normative concerns of the poststructuralists. The chapter further argues for context-specific definitions of foreign policy, utilises the discussion around subjectivity and practice to address the issues of decisions and interactions and outlines an agenda for a discourse-theoretical foreign policy analysis. Arguing that foreign policy is always contextual, yet there are also patterns that allow us to construct a degree of general knowledge about foreign policies across different cases, the last section outlines three social logics governing foreign policy in the current world: state sovereignty, peaceful resolution and international communities.

Chapter 5 closes the first half of the thesis by discussing methodology. The notion of method as a mere tool for representing the 'real world' is rejected and methods are instead seen as articulatory practices, through which the researcher acts upon the world. Methodology is then above all about reflection on and communication of the choices made during the research process. Crucially, this approach explicitly admits and highlights the arbitrariness of methodological decisions or the hardly explicable role of empathy and intuition, rather than obscuring them by references to seemingly neutral rules and procedures. The key choices are outlined around the traditional issues of the object of analysis, the research question, the methods, the data and the ways they are interpreted. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the analytical movement from particular texts to explanatory logics. I also debate the

specifics of interpreting interviews and visuals, as these are used to complement the more traditional textual analysis in this thesis.

Chapter 6 provides first engagement with Germany's foreign policy in the Iraq crisis, finally articulating the three fields in an explicit manner. Through the reading of primary and secondary sources, it asks what Germany's foreign policy actually was and why it constitutes a problem. This may appear confusing, since the problematic aspects of the case – policy inconsistency and the emotional as well as existential nature of the debate – have been outlined already in the very first paragraphs of the dissertation. This is one of the moments when the linear structure of the thesis clashes with the 'to and fro' logic of articulation that guides the research process. In the approach adopted in this dissertation, problems do not exist out there in the world. Instead, the construction of something as a problem results only from a particular, always already theoretically-inspired reading of a certain situation. Therefore, the formulation of the puzzle was possible only through and after the reconstruction of the development of Germany's foreign policies in the Iraq crises, one in which also the meanings ascribed to them by policymakers themselves had to be taken in account. To argue that debates were emotional and Germany's very identities were constructed as at risk, one first has to immerse into the debates. To suggest that policies were inconsistent, one has to map all their different aspects. This is the purpose of this chapter, which illustrates the salience and nuances of the research puzzle and provides the empirical context for a further analysis.

The remaining three chapters present a discourse analysis of Germany's policies around the three dimensions of subjectivity and social reality: sedimented practices, political contestation and affective attachment. This is done with the help of the three sets of logics. Chapter 7 focuses on the sedimented rules and routinised practices that constitute the 'common sense' of Germany's foreign policy. These are to be found in the specific German articulation of the broader social logics of state sovereignty, peaceful resolution and international communities. The three social logics provide the resources from which particular policies need to be constructed in order to be thinkable and socially acceptable. They are broadly shared across the political spectrum and in the society and are constitutive of Germany's identities. Social logics are transferable across different contexts – if not in an unchanged form – and those who would dispute them are disciplined and marginalised by the societal mainstream. The three logics usually work well together. However, they may clash in the time of a crisis such as that over Iraq, when it became increasingly difficult to follow the rules of peaceful conduct and loyalty to important international partners at the same time. In the first reading, the research puzzle is addressed in terms of conflicts between different social logics.

Chapter 8 takes the next step by focusing on the reconstruction of political space in the context of the Iraq crisis. It examines how Iraq was constructed as a 'crisis' in the first place and how it managed to dislocate the existing hegemonic order of the three social logics. Following this dislocation, a number of different political projects aspired to make sense of the situation and write policy decisions into it. These constructions revolved around questions such as what the problem was, who was responsible for it, what was at stake and, crucially, with whom and against whom Germany stood. Rival constructions offered very different accounts of the situation, ranging from America's imperial war that had to be resisted to Germany's irresponsible break from the Western community that had to be avoided. Foreign policy was then articulated in an environment in which none of these projects managed to hegemonise the discursive terrain by providing a broadly accepted 'common sense' explanation. Moreover, the key policymakers themselves constructed the situation by relying on multiple of these hardly commensurable narratives simultaneously. In a second step, Germany's perplexing policies are explained through the absence of a hegemonic interpretation of the Iraq crises and the cacophony of narratives in Germany's discursively disordered terrain.

Chapter 9, finally, turns to the question of why were German politicians unable to make clear-cut choices between the different social logics and political projects. The answer is found in affective attachment to the norms, practices and signifiers provided by social and political logics, which are also constitutive of identities. Following the Lacanian argument that the dynamics of social life are driven by the subject's desire to overcome her constitutive split and achieve a full and stable identity, the chapter examines how this was done through the articulation of particular fantasies. Fantasies are narrative scenarios which capture desire by promising the subjects the full enjoyment of a whole identity, thereby channelling into discourse the affective attachment that enables the subject 'go on' and binds her to social orders. A number of such fantasies were discernible in the case under consideration, which rallied the affective force behind different social logics, political projects and policies. The fantasy of American crusaders enjoying themselves in their religious zeal supported anti-war identifications, whereas the fantasy of the return of Germany's militarist or even National Socialist past pushed the subjects to identify with the United States. The strong presence of the fantasy element helps explain the affectivity of the discourse. With respect to inconsistency, just like with political projects, Germany's politicians were also articulating multiple fantasies simultaneously, which led to the policy deadlock, since the attachment to each of the respective fantasies was too strong to be abandoned.

The three sets of logics then present equal components of my critical explanation. The answer to the puzzle is thus sought in an articulation of all the different elements. The implications of the arguments for broader debates, its limits as well its relations to our current political predicament are then discussed in the conclusion.

## **2 | Sporadic encounters**

### **Germany, foreign policy, discourse theory**

This chapter provides an initial exploration of the current state of the three literatures to which this thesis contributes: Germany's foreign policy, discourse-theoretical foreign policy analysis and the 'Essex School' in social theory and IR. In a conventional manner, it reviews the existing debates and points out the key arguments and crucial limitations, thereby defining the gaps which this thesis aspires to fill. The principal aim is to construct a research agenda, identify problems and ask questions. Answers are provided in the chapters that follow. The argument proceeds in three steps. First, I evaluate some of the key contributions to the prolific literature on Germany's foreign and security policy. I argue that this body of work provides useful insights into cultural and historical parameters of Germany's foreign policy, yet its conceptual underpinnings are theoretically problematic and analytically limiting. Second, I review the existing poststructuralist discursive approaches to foreign policy, which promise to offer an alternative to the positivist-constructivist mainstream in the debate on Germany. While the existing literature presents a good starting point, I argue that it is limited by self-imposed dilemmas and onto-epistemological deficiencies. Third, I introduce the Essex School of discourse theory as a social-theoretical background for a further development of the discursive argument and map how it has been utilised in international studies so far. Admittedly, the three sections may appear disconnected from one another, but that only reflects the current state of the scholarship. Therefore, my central conclusion is that encounters between the work on Germany, foreign policy analysis and the Essex School of discourse theory have so far been only sporadic.

#### **German foreign policy**

There are few countries whose foreign policies have been discussed more than Germany's. Hellmann (2009) even argues that Germany was second only to the United States in the literature written in the 1990s and early 2000s. This is hardly surprising, as Germany's reunification and the related issue of European order were seen as key political problems of the time. Simultaneously, the 'return of the German question' provided an intellectual battleground for theory-driven debates between dominant IR traditions. However, despite the amount of engagement and its own grand debates, the vast majority of the literature offers strikingly similar narratives. There is a broad consensus in the very definition of the problems to be examined, with identical starting points (Germany's peculiar position in the

Cold War and the change in the international environment since the 1990s) and questions (continuity vs. change in foreign policy). Very similar is also the way these issues are approached theoretically. Most authors share some variation of a liberally-flavoured ‘soft’ constructivist ontology that acknowledges the importance of norms, identities and social learning. At the same time, there is a prevailing agreement on the limits of constructionism, expressed in the insistence on the explanatory value of ‘reality’ beyond construction (Zehfuss 2002) and the adoption of positivist epistemologies.

There are few alternatives that would push the debate beyond merely parametrical discussions. At first sight, IR realism appears to be one of them as most of the literature uses it as ‘the other’ against which it builds its argument (Hellmann 2009). However, this differentiation is overestimated, as the realism against which the mainstream defines itself is the offensive version as epitomised by John Mearsheimer. This is an easy intellectual enemy as there are hardly any detailed studies dealing with Germany from such a perspective. More importantly, the rhetorical slaying of a supposedly dominant tradition obscures that key realist arguments (e.g. regarding state-centrism, power and interests) are in fact often incorporated under the constructivist façade. In turn, even some of the prominent self-declared realists in the debate use constructivist concepts themselves (Szabo 2004, Crawford 2007, Dettke 2009). While 1980s-style neorealism has remained more or less silent since the mid-1990s, other versions of realist thought that are more sensitive to the importance of culture and history have merged with the constructivist mainstream (for an explicit theoretical marriage of constructivism and realism in the context of German foreign policy see Hyde-Price 2000, Karp 2009).

A much more fundamental challenge comes from accounts rooted in poststructuralism and discourse theory. Starting from alternative ontological and epistemological viewpoints, they focus on the relationship between power and knowledge that lies at the heart of the contingent construction of the ‘world’ within which German foreign policy is both conducted and analysed. However, such accounts have been rare so far and had a very limited influence on the debate (poststructuralist approaches include Bach 1999, Zehfuss 2002, 2007, Nonhoff and Stengel 2014, an original pragmatist take on discourse is offered by Hellmann et al. 2007, Hellmann, Weber, and Sauer 2008, Hellmann 2009, Roos 2010). With the exception of Nonhoff and Stengel’s (2014) book chapter, none of them builds on the arguments of the Essex School. Further, aside from Zehfuss (2007) and her analysis of emotional aspects of memory, discourse-theoretical literature on Germany remains at the level of discourse as a symbolic system and does not focus on the affective bond that holds

discourses together.<sup>1</sup> While some of these efforts – especially those of Bach and Zehfuss – are impressive, much more needs to be done to put poststructuralism and discourse theory on the map.

The section further proceeds in two steps, in which I evaluate the mainstream literature on Germany's post-1989 foreign policy. Predictive and speculative debates in the early 1990s are left aside (for reviews see Hellmann 1996, Peters 1997, Sperling 2003) and the focus is on the main trends in the scholarship written roughly from 1998 onwards. In the first part, I present the dominant arguments within the literature. In the second part, I focus on the problems of this work in order to show that the theoretical basis upon which it relies is problematic theoretically and limits what can be said empirically.

#### **a) Dominant accounts of German foreign policy: Civilian power and normalisation**

The typical starting point for analysing the Federal Republic's foreign policy is West Germany's situation after World War II (East Germany being largely ignored). The consensual narrative is that after the defeat, occupied and parted Germany was not allowed to return to her great power role. Taking the past as the dangerous other, the post-war establishment – under the supervision of the Allies – constructed a very new polity; a liberal democracy with a thorough civilian control of the military. The 'Bonn Republic' then developed under a dual international constraint. The bipolar constellation of the Cold War led to West Germany's firm incorporation within 'the West' as epitomised by NATO, while the fear of old security dilemmas initiated and fuelled European integration.

According to a first narrative, semi-imposed necessities gradually developed into a distinct culture and/or a particular national identity. Germany became a *civilian power* – a state that does not assertively pursue national interests, but strives to contribute to the establishment of an international order based on norms and cooperative arrangements. The term 'civilian power' was coined by Hanns Maull (Maull 1990, 2000a, Kirste and Maull 1996, Maull and Harnisch 2001) and used above all by German authors (Harnisch 2001, Tewes 2002, Risse 2004, 2007). In the Anglo-Saxon context, analogical arguments have been made with the concept of culture, labelled as 'political' (Duffield 1998), 'politico-military' (Berger 1998), or 'strategic' (Longhurst 2004). While working with different terms (culture, identity, norms

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<sup>1</sup> Some works in the mainstream constructivist tradition refer to affects and emotions as already incorporated in their concept of culture (Duffield 1998, Longhurst 2004). However, they neither develop this connection theoretically, nor focus on it empirically. With the exception of these works and articles with only partial interest in affective aspects of German foreign policy, e.g. Berenskoetter and Giegerich's (2010) paper based on the concept of ontological security and Koschut's (2014) work on 'emotional (security) communities', analysis of affect has been absent from the literature on Germany.



etc.), all of these authors highlight the importance of socialisation and intersubjectivity through which specific national attitudes are developed and reproduced. 'Objective' constraints and pressures (e.g. economic performance, distribution of power within the international system) are not denied, but they are seen either as mediated through the cultural lens – with culture/identity functioning as an intervening variable (most explicitly Tewes 2002), or as competing/complementing independent variables (e.g. Duffield 1998). In the German case, the lists of culturally specific features typically include multilateralism, alliance loyalty, insistence on international law, anti-militarism, reluctance with respect to the use of force, and promotion of value-based agendas.

The central role of intersubjectivity and socialisation helps civilian power theorists to provide an answer to what is seen as a key problem: the issue of continuity and change in German foreign policy after the reunification. For the authors above, there is an overwhelming pattern of continuity between the foreign policies of the Bonn and the Berlin Republic. While the international environment has indeed changed profoundly, as the explanation goes, German elites still think of themselves in terms of a civilian power and Berlin's foreign policies are thus faithful to the old principles. This is not to say that everything remains the same, as the participation of German soldiers in military operations all over the world demonstrates. However, these alterations are exceptions resulting from the pressures from the international environment. Rather than changes, they are merely 'modifications' (Mauß 2000a, Harnisch 2001, Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, Wolff 2013), 'subtle reformulations' (Hyde-Price 2000), 'evolutions' (Mauß 2000b), 'rebalancings' (Karp 2009), or 'adjustments' (Longhurst 2004, Rudolf 2006) within the general pattern of continuity.

The key contender to civilian power is the *normalisation* thesis. Its original realist formulation in the early 1990s predicted Germany a swift return to a great power role, but it had been marginalised within IR debates by the end of the decade.<sup>2</sup> A more sophisticated version emerged in its stead, gaining in influence with a series of Germany's apparent departures from civilian power in the 2000s – including the break with the US over Iraq under the Schröder government. The starting point is no different from the civilian power thesis, namely the particular situation of the Bonn Republic. However, the question of continuity vs. change is responded to differently: the Berlin Republic has been abandoning its old patterns and gradually becoming a 'normal power'. The driving force of this change (independent variable) is seen as predominantly external and out of Germany's control, but it

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<sup>2</sup> Traditional realist arguments are still being presented in the public debate as the post-Iraq essays of prominent intellectuals Egon Bahr (2003) and Gregor Schöllgen (2003) illustrate. However, these voices play a marginal role within the IR community.

is also amplified by domestic factors, such as generation change and economic performance. Normalisation is rather a process than a state – it is uneasy, disputed and still ongoing. At the same time, there is no doubt that Germany has become more ‘self-confident’ (Dettke 2009, Hellmann 2011), ‘assertive’(Crawford 2007, Wittlinger and Larose 2007), ‘mature’ (Leithner 2009) or ‘emancipated’ (Forsberg 2005, Joetze 2010).

At first sight, the civilian power and normalisation arguments seem to be in a direct contradiction, very much along the liberal/realist divide in IR. However, they also share a substantial common ground. Proponents of normalisation are generally as positivist-constructivist in their concepts and assumptions as their counterparts. The external pressure of the international environment does not have a direct effect on policies. Instead, it influences the intervening variables and mediating factors, leading to a change in identity (Leithner 2009, Wittlinger 2010), culture (Dettke 2009), role (Oppermann 2012), self-image (Forsberg 2005, Hellmann 2011) or collective memory (Wittlinger and Larose 2007).<sup>3</sup> The difference from the civilian power argument lies merely in the interpretation of what constitutes change and whether it is happening. Crucially, while the ‘normality’ of normalisation clearly means different things (on this also Bach 1999, Dettke 2009, Kundnani 2012), it hardly ever constitutes the return to a 19<sup>th</sup> century style great power politics. Instead, either new conceptualisations of power are offered, portraying Germany as an ‘embedded hegemon in Europe’ (Crawford 2007), a ‘reluctant hegemon’ (Paterson 2011, Bulmer and Paterson 2013) and a ‘geo-economic power’ (Kundnani 2011, 2014), or normality means approximating Germany’s foreign policy to Britain and France (Baumann and Hellmann 2001, Wagener 2006).

The two core theses also play a key role in explaining particular events, including the Iraq crisis. In fact, events are all too often treated as a playground for proving pre-supposed claims, as yet another instance of this or that trend (following the explanatory logic of subsumption, see Hellmann 2009 and my own perspective in Chapter 3). Unsurprisingly, the vocal opposition of the Schröder government has often been interpreted as proving the normalisation thesis; as an example of Germany’s newly self-confident and independent international performance (Szabo 2004, Forsberg 2005, Leithner 2009, Dettke 2009, Wittlinger 2010). However, the civilian power school also offered a number of contributions insisting on the continuity of Germany’s traditional foreign policy principles even in the Iraqi case. For some, different civilian power principles clashed with one another (e.g. preference for international law and multilateral solutions vs. special relationship to the

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<sup>3</sup> Even Crawford’s explicitly realist argument has a place for the role of political culture, even though she sees it as a supplementary variable that is second to ‘power and the state of the economy’ (2007: 1).

USA), necessitating a choice without abandoning any of them in the long term (Harnisch 2004, Risse 2004, 2007, Karp 2005). For others, it was rather the Bush administration that temporarily damaged mutual relations than cultural changes within the Berlin Republic (Rudolf 2005, 2006); the split over Iraq was therefore about ‘diverging norm constructions’ (Nabers 2006: 314, similar argument supplements the normalisation thesis in Dettke 2009: 36-7). For yet others, Iraq was simply an exception from the rule (Mauß 2003b).

### **b) Problems with the mainstream: Binaries and teleologies**

Seen from a discourse-theoretical perspective, the literature surely offers empirical insights that should be taken in account, if not uncritically. On a theoretical level, however, it relies on a number of problematic assumptions. This argument can be led in general terms, as a critique of the positivist-constructivist inspiration that underpins the work of most authors cited above. In IR, this has been done by poststructuralists who have highlighted that ‘middle ground’ constructivists offer merely a modest twist on IR ‘rationalism’, as they remain within the limits of positivist epistemologies, are language-blind, have a problematic conception of subjectivity, rely on a non-constructed kernel of ‘reality’ and obscure the politics of social construction (Campbell 1998, Zehfuss 2002, Hansen 2006, Arfi 2010). Building on this broad perspective, I will relate my criticisms directly to the debates on Germany to show how the chosen theoretical lens limits the mainstream empirical analyses. Drawing on the few discourse-theoretical works on Germany (esp. Bach 1999, Zehfuss 2002, Hellmann 2009) I focus on two particularly salient issues: the posing of questions in terms of continuity vs. change and the problematic treatment of structure and agency.

The first issue is the question of continuity vs. change and the centrality it has achieved in the literature (for a similar critique also Hellmann et al. 2007, Hellmann, Weber, and Sauer 2008, Hellmann 2009). The problematic nature of the two categories can be disclosed even without indulging in deep philosophical debates, for instance by pointing to the problem of international interventions. There were virtually no military missions before 1989 that Germany was asked to participate in,<sup>4</sup> which is in stark contrast to the situation post-1990. However, even the later cases when Germany was asked to join – e.g. Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria – were very different from one another in terms of international legality, the implementing party or the expectations from Germany. As long as one is faced with different situations, the same thing cannot be repeated twice and pure continuity is impossible. At the same time, all of the cases shared a significant pattern of similarity and were decided from within the same political structures both domestically and internationally. Empirically speaking, very similar rhetorical patterns were used to argue

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<sup>4</sup> The exception being the Western Union’s naval operations in the Persian Gulf from 1987, which West Germany supported indirectly.

Germany's position. Just like with pure continuity, pure change also does not seem to be the case.

It is no surprise that most authors come to the conclusion that there has been some sort of a mixture of continuity and change in German foreign policy (most explicitly Longhurst 2004, Risse 2004). Yet, interestingly, they still insist that one of the two aspects prevailed and that it is important to know which one. It is here that the underlying onto-epistemological assumptions hit their limit stemming from a correspondence theory of reality (the world is out there to be seen) in which they are based: the literature fails to scrutinise continuity and change as concepts. Instead, the two are treated as observable phenomena, which are to be confirmed or disconfirmed by the gathering of empirical facts. As a number of 'facts' can be weighed in both directions, the decision between them is to a large extent arbitrary, especially when it is not entirely clear what exactly constitutes 'change', e.g. as opposed to mere 'modification'. However, this degree of arbitrariness is hardly commensurable with the positivist and objectivist conception of science to which the literature subscribes.

Additionally, the continuity/change thinking is notably linear and teleological (see also Bach 1999, Hellmann 2009). Proponents of both civilian power and normalisation provide what Foucault (1977) calls 'the historian's history' – depoliticised narratives with a clear origin, logical development and an endpoint. This obscures the indeterminacy, complexity and inconsistency of social life, in which norms, identities and cultures are constantly renegotiated. In consequence, the literature struggles to account for the contradictions, ambiguities and shifts in foreign policy of which the case of Iraq is a prime example. Instead, it offers smooth narratives of Germany's past, in which the defeat of the Third Reich and the civilian power culture of the Bonn Republic play a pivotal role, followed by the equally unquestioned radical change of 1989/1990, which serves as a catalyst in the story: either it forces Germany to normalise, or it is resisted through ongoing commitment to the old values. Both narratives also have a clear endpoint: either a resilient civilian power as the embodiment of liberal values, or a returning normal power that escapes the constraints of the Cold War. In both cases, the contingency of events is denied as they are subsumed under overarching grand narratives that offer simplistic and questionable readings of history.

Second, similarly problematic is the way the literature conceptualises the relationship between structure and agency. The central contribution of constructivism to IR consists of the ontological argument – adopted above all from Anthony Giddens – that agency and structure are mutually constitutive. Structures shape actions, whilst the cumulative effect of actions reproduces and transforms structures (Wendt 1987). The key problem with the way this is adopted in the works on Germany – and this is a general limit of Giddens' and

Wendt's theorising (see Doty 1997, Glynos and Howarth 2008) – is that agency and structure are treated as ontologically different phenomena. It appears that two separate stories are told (Hollis and Smith 1990). On the structural side, there is the narrative of the unfolding of Germany's culture/identity, both in its continuity/civilian power and change/normalisation versions. This story appears to be preferred in most of the literature – e.g. in the interest in “general and sustained patterns [...] rather than specific decisions and actions” (Duffield 1998: 15) and the focus on “how identities affect the definition of state interest” (Tewes 2002: 22). The central argument is that these structures influence policymaking. Culture/identity limits the space for action and/or ranks preferences by defining appropriate behaviour for a particular actor. The structural logic of culture/identity is thus the *logic of appropriateness* (March and Olsen 1998).

However, a rather different story is often being told on the agency side; one where rational self-interested individuals calculate and negotiate their gains and losses. Interestingly, while authors like Duffield remain on the structural level, the agentic story appears to be equally important for others. The role-theory account of civilian power is seen as ‘actor-centred’ (Kirste and Maull 1996: 284) and ‘individuals’ are ‘the ultimate agents’ (Tewes 2002: 25), who are sometimes even “fully aware of their strategic cultural context” (Longhurst 2004: 20). The prime example of the focus on rationally calculating agents is the analysis of the Schröder government's position in the Iraq crisis, which is unanimously explained as at least partially motivated by the expectation of electoral gains. Clearly, such behaviour is not guided by the principle of appropriateness, but rather by a very different, self-interested and individualist *logic of expected consequences* (March and Olsen 1998). The only difference is whether this calculation was an exception to the pattern of civilian power (Maull 2003b, Harnisch 2004) or an independent contribution amplifying the broader tendency of normalisation (Szabo 2004, Dettke 2009).

The emphasis the literature gives to the grand narratives of continuity/change in the patterns of culture/identity makes it vulnerable to the critique that its focus is overtly structural (Baumann and Hellmann 2001). However, the separation of structure from agency through the introduction of rational instrumentality makes it also too agentic at the same time. Identity/culture is objectivised as something that influences foreign policy, yet simultaneously pushed to the background by the introduction of the logic of consequences. Thereby, the structure of culture/identity gains the status of some sort of external ‘reality’ over which agents have little influence. Politics is reduced to rational individualist decision-making within these depoliticised cultural contexts, which obscures the unavoidably

contested and therefore supremely political nature of social structures.<sup>5</sup> While the authors cited in this section are all interested in foreign policy, they spend much more time theorising culture/identity – to the point that only very few of them clarify what they even mean by foreign policy. Therefore, foreign policy is clearly under-theorised in the literature on Germany. It is something that results simultaneously from structural pressures and agentic calculations, but the link between the two is not conceptualised sufficiently.

This is not to say that there are no attempts to link the two stories of structure and agency, usually by combining the logics of appropriateness and consequences. Such arguments have a strong common-sense appeal, be it in Maull's (2003a, 2011, 2012) overriding of normative structures by short-term calculations, Risse's (2007) argument that rational calculation takes over when identity-based principles clash and neutralise one another, or the synthetic claim that actors calculate according to the logic of consequences within a broader framework of culturally defined appropriateness (Hyde-Price 2000). However, are the two logics commensurable? I am not convinced, since each of them presumes a different view on subjectivity. The subject can hardly be simultaneously a socially constructed cultural product and an independent rational actor calculating her own exogenously given interests without a clear ontological primacy of one of the two aspects. While the literature continues telling the two separate stories, most of the authors clearly do make an ontological decision with respect to subjectivity. In her heart, their subject is a rational actor with a large degree of autonomy. The structures limit his/her actions and colour her view of the world, but she can break free from these constraints rather easily. In an attempt to explain events that do not seem to fit, the likes of Risse, Harnisch, and Maull run from their constructivist ontology to the safety of common-sense rationalism (Nonhoff and Stengel 2014).

### **Discursive poststructuralism and foreign policy**

The turn to discourse offers a way of solving the problems identified in the previous section, since it is precisely the questions of binaries, teleologies or the political nature of cultures that are addressed by this tradition, notably by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and their followers in IR. However, does that mean that we can simply reach to the existing frameworks for discursive foreign policy analysis and articulate them within the German context? In this section, I will review the trends and patterns in poststructuralist discourse-theoretical analyses of foreign policy in order to highlight their most important

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<sup>5</sup> As probably the most sophisticated voice in the debate, Tewes (2002: 21) is an exception from this particular critical point.

achievements, but also their limitations, which need to be addressed at the level of social theory. Importantly, the following pages map the field of foreign policy studies *within* poststructuralist discourse-theoretical approaches. The relations and differences between this group and more traditional scholarship have been examined in detail (Doty 1993, Campbell 1998, Hansen 2006, Browning 2008) and there is no need to repeat the exercise. My choice of authors was guided by two pragmatic questions: Which contributions can be utilised for the construction of a discourse-theoretical foreign policy analysis? Which are the main issues and debates such a project has to take into account? For heuristic purposes, I split the narrative into two groups, which I call *initial explorers* and *quasi-explanatory analysts*.

#### **a) Initial explorers**

Among initial explorers I count the authors who published their key texts between mid-1980s and mid-1990s and paved the way for discursive theorising in IR. This includes Richard Ashley, James Der Derian, R.B.J. Walker and Cynthia Weber, who all dealt with foreign policy in one way or another. Nevertheless, it is above all the works of David Campbell (1993, 1998) and Roxanne Lynn Doty (1993, 1996) that have become major points of reference due to their closely focused and empirically rich studies. The core aim of this heterogeneous group is to problematise dominant modes of understanding in the ‘actual practice’ of international politics and the supposedly detached discipline of International Relations. Taking inspiration above all from Foucault and Derrida, they reach to the central themes of mainstream IR to challenge and subvert them. This includes the notions of sovereignty, anarchy and the state (Ashley 1988, Walker 1993, Weber 1994). Foreign policy has become of interest through its relation to these concepts, which has also led to its fundamental redefinition.

Campbell rejects the traditional, or what I will call *topographical* definition of foreign policy as “the politics of states towards the external world” (1998: 38) on the grounds that it takes both ‘states’ and ‘the external world’ for granted. Conceived in a traditional way, foreign policy contributes to the very making of what it promises to analyse. It reproduces the state as a fully constituted, intentional subject, rather than unveiling it as “an intrinsically contested, always ambiguous, never complete construct [...] always in the process of being imposed in the face of never-quieted resistances” (Ashley 1988: 231). In its stead, Campbell and Doty offer a *functional* definition of foreign policy and define it as a discursive practice with a number of socio-political effects. For Campbell, it (re)produces boundaries, “makes ‘foreign’ certain events and actors” (1998: 61) and is “central to the production and reproduction of the identity in whose name it operates” (ibid.: 68). Similarly, for Doty (1993: 305) foreign policy is a “practice that produces a social order as well as one through which

individual and collective subjects themselves are produced and reproduced.” The differentiation is further highlighted by Campbell’s much cited distinction between ‘Foreign Policy’ and ‘foreign policy’. While the former refers to the state-centric, topographical definition, the latter incorporates “all practices of differentiation or modes of exclusion” (Campbell 1998: 69). This requires stepping away from the state to search for exclusionary and border-drawing practices in all possible locales, no matter how far from the concerns of ‘Foreign Policy’ they may be. Crucially, for Campbell it is the broad ‘foreign policy’ that is more important. The narrow ‘Foreign Policy’ is effectively its subset, as only one of the practices that reproduce the identities constructed by ‘foreign policy’.

As the focus moves from ‘the sources of state conduct’ to ‘modes of representations’ and their ‘manifest political consequences’ (Campbell 1998: 137), different research questions have to be asked. In a widely refrained move, Doty (1993, 1996) offers the distinction between ‘why’ questions and ‘how’ questions and pleads for the latter. For Doty, ‘why’ questions evoke positivist epistemology tied to the notions of probability and predictability, while ‘how’ questions relate to the Foucauldian conception of power as constitutive of meaning and subjectivity. Therefore, in Doty’s work “[w]hat is explained is not *why* a particular outcome obtained, but *how* the subjects, objects and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were made possible.” (Doty 1993: 298, orig. emph.)

This differentiation produces two consequences, which became the defining features of the initial explorers. First, there is the epistemological break with what Campbell (1998: 4) calls ‘epistemic realism’. This entails the rejection of the language of variables and causal relations and a turn to interpretivism. The initial explorers thus examine the power/knowledge nexus that reproduces states as the key units, equips them with borders and ascribes them the agency and legitimacy to act in the world of relations between them. Critique becomes the central political, but also epistemological strategy. By implication, this leads to big picture analyses that stretch over multiple centuries and devote only modest attention to particular cases of policymaking. Doty makes no secret that “the policy decision itself becomes a secondary concern. What is central is the discourse(s) which construct a particular ‘reality’.” (Doty 1993: 303) Therefore, the second feature of this scholarship, one that Doty (1993: 305) admits herself, is its largely structural focus. It examines how dominant meaning structures are constituted, institutionalised and challenged through practices of foreign policy, but not really how foreign policy is practiced from within these structures or how and why some courses of actions are chosen over others. Even though Doty (1993: 299) admits that “we can still ask why”, neither she nor other initial explorers are interested in doing so.



The works of Campbell, Doty and other related scholars are now standard textbook references. However, they are not without limitations, around which a largely sympathetic critique emerged since late 1990s. The first problem is the already noted *structural tendency*, whose rejection played an important role in the establishment of two intellectual projects. The ‘critical constructivists’ (most explicit statements are Milliken 1999, Weldes 1999, Fierke 2001) reach to structuration theory so as to be able to analyse intersubjective interactions, maintaining equidistance from poststructuralism and ‘middle ground’ constructivism of the sort that dominates the debate on German foreign policy. Similarly, Iver Neumann (2002) demands a ‘practice turn’ to complement the focus on predominantly linguistic ‘preconditions for social action’ with ‘the study of social action itself’ (this was picked up by many authors, see Adler and Pouliot 2011a). These exchanges open an intriguing question, one that will be discussed in detail throughout the thesis: Does discourse theory provide tools for theorising *both* the construction of meaningful structures *and* the more traditional concerns of the conduct of foreign policy?

A second point of contention is the *privileging of critique over explanation*. Ole Wæver (2002, 2005) has been among those who raised this argument. Labelling himself an ‘early poststructuralist’, Wæver is at odds with the anti-scientist approach of the initial explorers, wants to present “an explanatory theory with quite a heavy dose of structuralism” (2002: 23), and even aspires to a certain predictive power of his theorising. The very opposite strategy, namely radicalising the critical impulse that is prominent especially in Campbell’s later work, has been adopted by scholars like Dan Bulley (2009). Bulley’s primary aim is not to provide an account of how discourses were constructed or foreign policies conducted. Rather than that, it lies in exposing and problematising the depoliticisation that is entailed in taking something for granted, e.g. the possibility of a ‘responsible’ foreign policy. This debate opens another promising avenue for inquiry: How can explanation and critique be brought together in an overarching research logic that would not compromise the onto-epistemological assumptions of discourse theory?

### **b) Quasi-explanatory analysts**

While in general the interest in foreign policy has somewhat waned in the poststructuralist corner, a very interesting body of literature emerged since the late 1990s; one that sought to keep the critical edge of the initial explorers yet also engage with issues closer to the traditional outlook. Building on Campbell, Doty, but also Wæver and Weldes, these scholars aspire not only to problematise and criticise, but also to explain. Thereby, they add another layer to the discursive argument in IR: on top of showing that policies are made possible by long-spanning discourses that reproduce the state, sovereignty and so on, they bring the

promise of analysing how exactly this happens in particular cases. As the notion of explanation has been traditionally understood in positivist terms, I call these authors *quasi-explanatory* analysts. The most elaborate of them are Thomas Diez (1999a, b, 2001, 2014) and Lene Hansen (2006), with especially the latter making a significant impact on discourse studies in IR. These two authors are of particular interest also because they build their accounts upon Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical argument in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, which makes them a useful starting point also from the theoretical perspective adopted in this thesis.

Diez and Hansen attempt to break the dichotomies discussed in the previous paragraphs, stating explicitly that "it would be a mistake to stay clear of the issues that traditional policy analysis is concerned with" (Diez 2001: 19, very similarly Hansen 2006). They argue for engaging with conventional questions such as "how do states generate responses to the problems they face and how do politicians rally support for their calls for action?" (Hansen 2006: 1) Their scholarship thus strives to bring the philosophical rigour and the critical edge of the initial explorers to the analysis of topographically conceived 'Foreign Policy'. Diez (2001: 19) admits that this entails the risk of 'sitting between the two chairs' of traditional policy analysis and discourse studies, however, only as long as we see the two as incommensurable. On an epistemological note, he has also recently made clear what has arguably been the bottom line of both his and Hansen's projects: "The aims of critique and explanation do not need to be mutually exclusive, and in fact critical discourse analysts have implicitly or explicitly included an explanatory element in their analyses." (Diez 2014: 322) This attitude is certainly not without perils, which I will comment on shortly. However, the unorthodox aspiration should be embraced as it bears the potential of resolving the dilemmas discussed in the previous section. Before offering an evaluation, I will first look closely at the arguments Diez and Hansen have to offer.

Criticising the overtly structural tendency in discursive IR, Diez (2001) suggests that equal attention should be paid to discursive structures and policies, the latter understood as discursive practices. This allows him to construct a dynamic model where hegemonic discourses exercise a structuring role on policies as the former contain encoded 'pre-decisions': "within the language in which we operate lies a set of choices about the political decisions of our day" (Diez 1999b: 611). However, that does not reduce policies to secondary 'effects', since discursive structures are themselves dependent on policies for their reproduction. There is always an element of creativity. "What is proposed here looks more like a glacier: in a snapshot, it is the structures that allow for a limited range of concrete articulations. But with each of these articulations these structures are themselves transformed a bit, and after a longer timespan, the glacier/discourse is no longer what it used to be." (Diez

2001: 31) Diez credits a number of intellectual sources, including the poststructuralist canon in theory (Foucault, Derrida) and IR (Ashley, Walker, Shapiro, Campbell), Giddens' structuration theory and Hejl's radical constructivist system theory. However, although his intellectual trajectory was much more complicated, Diez's account is in the end grounded above all in a sophisticated appropriation of the arguments of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. This observation will play a role once I move to critique, since the shortcomings of Diez are in fact engendered already in Laclau and Mouffe and can be overcome by reaching to later versions of the Essex School framework.

Hansen offers an elaborate theoretical scheme too, one constructed around the premise that foreign policy and identity – as her central concept for analysing discourse – are intimately related: “Identities are produced, and reproduced, through foreign policy discourse, and there is thus no identity existing prior to and independently of foreign policy.” (Hansen 2006: 26) Identity is dependent on policymakers for reproduction in the process of legitimising policies. And vice versa, foreign policy needs to be in accord with identity constructions. Hansen formalises this in a ‘model of combinability’, built on the assumption that “at the center of political activity is the construction of a link between policy and identity that makes the two appear consistent with each other.” (Hansen 2006: 28) For Hansen, the relationship between identity and policy can thus be approximated to the salt-water balance in the human body: “[I]f there is an imbalance in the construction of the link between identity and policy there will be an attempt to make an adjustment to recreate stability through modification of either the construction of identity or the proposed policy.” (Hansen 2006: 29)

This ‘either-or’ presents the most important difference between Diez and Hansen. For Diez, by practicing foreign policy, the ‘glacier’ of identity is automatically reproduced and somewhat altered. In contrast, Hansen's equilibrium can be influenced both on the side of the ‘water’ and on the side of the ‘salt’. Her model thus introduces a degree of distance between identity and foreign policy (not unlike the mainstream scholarship on German foreign policy), one that is filled by the ‘link’. This allows more agency for policymakers, who have to construct not only policy (with identity being the necessary side-effect as Diez would argue), but also identity itself and, as I would add, even the link between them. While also building on Laclau and Mouffe, Hansen's inspiration is looser than Diez's.

The contribution of Diez and Hansen is crucial as it provides frameworks for conducting analysis of traditionally defined foreign policy in discursive terms, but it is not without problems. Two issues are particularly persistent. First, how exactly are particular policies constructed and decided from within their discursive contexts? Questions of decision-making are central in policy analyses traditionally conceived, yet absent in the projects of the initial

explorers. Poststructuralists, whose work Diez and Hansen build upon, have insisted that we should dispose of the Cartesian idea of a sovereign subject and that decisions are always produced within particular discourses. At the same time, the determinist argument that decisions are mere effects of discursive structures is rejected. In general, poststructuralist thinking oscillates between the emphasis on discursive structures inherited from structuralism and the Derridean take on the decision as a 'moment of madness' that cannot be accounted for by anything else than itself. This oscillation plays itself in the work of Diez and Hansen who both see policies as discourse-bound, yet also speak of agency or creativity in their construction and implementation.

Similarly to Doty, Diez is not interested in particular decisions, as relying on 'pre-decisions' should be sufficient. Discursive structures push us somewhere by making certain options intelligible and possible, where the creative, unpredictable element of agency takes over. To highlight the importance of agency in contrast to the overtly structural tendency in discursive scholarship, Diez invokes Wendt and Giddens and labels his position 'linguistic structurationism' (Diez 1999b, 2014). However, when presenting his case study of British discourses on Europe, he argues the following: "The crucial question to ask from a discursive perspective is not, say, Why did Britain in 1961 apply for membership?, but How could Macmillan make a case for this application that looked reasonable at least to some, and how did this affect the overall discourse?" (Diez 2001: 24) Despite his criticism of structural tendencies in discursive IR and the ambition to bridge the gaps between traditional and discursive scholarship, Diez himself seems to retreat into the structural focus (conditions for making a reasonable looking application) and the analysis of 'how' questions when it comes to policy decisions. In the end, his analysis is very similar to that of Doty and a number of intriguing questions remain out of his focus – such as why would Macmillan construct the option of applying and choose to promote it in the first place. In short, Diez acknowledges the role of agency, but neither conceptualises it, nor brings it into his analysis.

For Hansen, decisions follow from structural pressures and instabilities. Something happens so that the current identity-policy constellation does not appear to fit the situation any longer, "forcing politicians to decide on the identity of a number of subjects." (Hansen 2006: 41) Agency, which Hansen acknowledges as playing an important part in her model, results from structural failures. Agency and decision-making are dependent on discourse as particular policy decisions are taken by relating to deeply sedimented discourses, such as Orientalism, that are reappropriated for our current purposes. As this is always a creative act, the unanswered questions in Hansen are essentially the same as in Diez: What precisely do we know about this relation between subject/agency and discourse/structure that results in a decision? For Hansen, as I will show later, the two parts of this relation seem to have a

different ontological status and follow different logics, just like in structuration theory and mainstream constructivism.

The second problem of Diez and Hansen is the clash of different policy alternatives within discourse. This is essentially an extension of the first issue, complicating the picture by adding the explicit struggle between different options. How can we account for the politics of choosing one policy over another? How do these alternative possibilities struggle within the discursive arena? Who or what is it that interacts – ‘agents’, or discourses?

For Diez (2001: 6), “the main struggle is [...] between competing discourses”. He tracks multiple discourses and argues that alternative policy proposals result from different imaginaries of the relation between key concepts like ‘governance’, ‘economy’ or ‘society’. In line with his glacier metaphor, these are constantly, if slowly, shifting. However, it seems that for Diez every policy generally reproduces a single discourse. The question is whether this does not underestimate the multiplicity of discourses that may be engaged simultaneously by the same subject and even within the same text. Could there not be two or more discourses present in a single policy decision? Can discourses mix ‘within’ subjects? Diez (1999a: 81-83) affirms this, but only for discourses of different layers – e.g. each discourse on Europe is tied together with deeper discourses on governance, legitimacy etc. Discourses on Europe themselves do not mix; they are parallel rather than overlapping and intertwined. In fairness to Diez, his model does not exclude this option, but it is neither explicitly acknowledged nor elaborated.

Hansen follows a similar direction, documenting interactions of different coalitions rallied behind competing discourses. However, the case study of US discourse on Bosnia forces her to account also for an outright clash between contradictory discourses that may happen *within* the same coalition, or indeed *within* subjects. Interestingly enough, to Hansen this is clearly a problem, rather than a legitimate option and a fairly common thing. When analysing the policies of the Clinton administration, she even speaks of ‘the dangers of ambiguous discourse’ (Hansen 2006: 136). At certain points of time the administration pursued an “ambiguous simultaneous articulation of the Genocide discourse and the Balkan discourse. These discourses were never fused but ran as unstable dual tracks through the first four months of Clinton’s presidency; as instability increased, a choice was necessitated to bring the policy-identity constellation into line.” (ibid.: 146)

This raises a simple question: Why and how was the choice necessitated? Hansen offers an answer: “[I]nconsistency is [...] often seized upon by other politicians, the media, and commentators, in particular during a heated political debate, and it was therefore highly unlikely that Clinton would be able to maintain his ambivalent discursive position.” (ibid.:

138) In other words, there are moments when the pressure of competing discourses narrows the possibilities to such an extent that a choice becomes necessary. In order to pursue this argument, Hansen needs to switch from interaction between discourses to an exchange between somewhat autonomous individuals, which presents a shift in her conceptual framework. The quote portrays Clinton with his back against the wall, yet simultaneously a large degree of agency in choosing between the two discursive structures. Now if my – or Clinton's in this case – identity is constructed discursively as Hansen argues throughout the book, how could I simply 'jump off' one of these discourses upon which my identity relies? Would I rather not try to deny the inconsistency or compromise between the two? As I will show in more detail in Chapter 4, this issue stems from Hansen's inconsistent treatment of subjectivity. In fact, that there are two different subjects in her – and similarly also Diez's – narrative: a 'poststructuralist' subject that is the product of discourse, and a 'constructivist', rather autonomous agent.

### **The Essex School and international studies**

Most problems identified in the previous two sections relate to the abstract questions of subjectivity, decision, explanation or critique. In order to address them, I need to go beyond the comfort zone of International Relations. This brings me to the third of the circles that intersect in this dissertation: the social-theoretical position known as the Essex School of discourse theory, a version of poststructuralism developed by Ernesto Laclau and his followers. While the genealogy of this tradition leads to many usual suspects of the 'linguistic turn' (Austin, Searle, Wittgenstein, Foucault, Derrida), the two most important pillars are Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and Lacanian psychoanalysis, the latter adopted above all via Slavoj Žižek.<sup>6</sup> Since the conceptual framework will be discussed extensively in the very next chapter, in this section I will only briefly introduce the Essex School as a promising source of theoretical inspiration and review the way it has been utilised in IR.

#### **a) The promise of the Essex School**

The Essex School is a loose research programme developed since the mid-1980s by Ernesto Laclau and his students, mainly at the University of Essex. Following Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (2001[1985]), these scholars developed complex frameworks with the explicit aim of using them for political analysis. In what can be read as

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<sup>6</sup> I am deliberately using 'Lacanian' rather than 'Lacan's'. As Lacan himself had little explicit interest in politics, I am drawing rather on the tradition that extends his concepts for the purpose of social and political analysis (esp. Žižek, Laclau, Stavrakakis and Glynos).

a manifesto, Laclau outlines the bulk of the programme: “What we set out to do was to elaborate an alternative approach to the understanding of the structuration of socio-political spaces by articulating a novel conception of *discourse*.” (Laclau 2000a: x; orig. emph.) The core feature of the approach is the extension of the concept of discourse beyond language, so that it equalises the social with the discursive: “the social must be identified with the infinite play of differences, that is, with what in the strictest sense of the term we can call *discourse* – on the condition, of course, that we liberate the concept from its restrictive meaning as speech and writing.” (Laclau 1990: 90; orig. emph.) Discourse thus becomes not only an analytical tool, but also the central ontological category. Therefore, nothing exists outside of discourses, defined *not* in terms of language, but as relational complexes that organise words, practices or objects. Since the 1990s and especially in the 2000s, the attention to discursivity was accompanied with the focus on its limits and the affective investment that underpins it (especially Laclau 1996b, 2005, Stavrakakis 1999, 2007), and a detailed elaboration of epistemology (Glynos and Howarth 2007).

What added value does this bring? There are two ways in addressing this crucial question, leading to rather different conclusions. First, it can be asked what the Essex approach helps us to do *in itself*, which I will comment on shortly. However, we can also ask why we should opt for the Essex School *in comparison* to other approaches grounded in different paradigms. The question would be how to weigh their conflicting starting points in their appeal to some kind of ‘truth’. My own position, developed in detail in Chapter 3, is that ‘truth’ is a feature of language and thus a matter of persuasion. At a certain level, our assumptions result from contingent choices which are also always grounded in our affective attachment to certain values. This starting point, which can neither be fully justified logically nor proved empirically, presents the limit of all knowledge. Therefore, I choose to demonstrate the merits of the Essex position *in itself*, as guided by the pragmatic criterion of what it enables us to see and say. Rather than arguing that it is better than approaches resting on different assumptions, I prefer to see it as an alternative. This dissertation presents *one* way of doing discourse-theoretical foreign policy analysis, not a comparison of different possibilities of doing so.<sup>7</sup>

Returning to the merits of the Essex School *in itself*, first of all, I believe it can open interdisciplinary conversations. Some of the most important debates in IR have been initiated and fuelled by social-theoretical reflections: from Cox’s turn to Gramsci and Wendt’s imports from Giddens and Bhaskar, to the numerous feminist, poststructuralist and postcolonial

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<sup>7</sup> To avoid misunderstanding, by saying that ultimately we cannot explain the choice of one set of assumptions over another, I do not dispute that we can reflect and provide reasons for our choices. This is what I am doing in defending my approach in the following two chapters.

efforts, as well as recent interests in ‘new materialisms’ or the ‘practice turn’. Nevertheless, IR has all too often been slow in catching up with social-theoretical advances. This makes the Essex School particularly interesting as this body of work has developed only recently. There had been little detailed engagement with the complexities of Laclau and Mouffe’s work until the late 1990s. The tide began to turn with Smith’s (1998) and Torfing’s (1999) monographs. The following decade saw books putting Laclau and Mouffe in the wider context of discursive theorising (Howarth 2000, Andersen 2003), edited volumes utilising the framework for political analysis (Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis 2000, Howarth 2005, Nonhoff 2007), a comprehensive critical evaluation of Laclau’s work (Critchley and Marchart 2004) and a string of monographs by a new generation of scholars (Nonhoff 2006, Norval 2007, Stavrakakis 1999, 2007, Glynos and Howarth 2007, Griggs and Howarth 2013, Howarth 2013). Both Ernesto Laclau, until his death in 2014, and Chantal Mouffe participated in the conversation with a number of interventions of their own (Laclau 1990, 1996b, 2005, 2014, Mouffe 1993, 2000, 2005, 2013).

This boom made the Essex School accessible to broader audiences and stimulated lively debates that have led to its constant rethinking and advancement. By reaching to these works, students of international politics could engage in up-to-date cross-disciplinary conversations, preferably with the ambition of feeding back the insights gained by appropriating the concepts for their specific purposes. More importantly, the Essex School, especially in the recent works of Glynos, Howarth and Stavrakakis, can serve as a basis for a revamped non-essentialist and non-foundationalist position in theoretical debates in international studies. Thus, it can provide a distinct alternative to the surge of scientific/critical realism (Kurki 2008, Joseph and Wight 2010), new materialisms (Coole and Frost 2010, reviewed in Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams 2015) or the practice turn (Neumann 2002, Adler and Pouliot 2011a), which all work with much narrower conceptions of discourse. The Lacanian view on subjectivity that is adopted in the later Essex School also directly speaks to literatures on affects/emotions (reviewed in Bleiker and Hutchison 2014) and ontological security (Mitzen 2006, Steele 2008).

Second and relatedly, the Essex approach can help us address some of the most persistent issues within critical IR, including the problems I have raised in the previous two sections. This argument will be developed throughout the thesis, so I resort only to two brief examples at this point. First, it offers a response to the call for a closer attention to methodology (Hansen 2006, Salter and Mutlu 2013, Aradau et al. 2015) as authors in the Essex tradition provide detailed reflections on method and its place in the overall research process (Howarth 2005, Glynos and Howarth 2007, Marttila 2013, 2015). Second, the problems of the overtly structural tendency and the inability to account for decisions and interactions can be



addressed by incorporating affect, a move that is explicitly theorised in the works that turn to Lacanian psychoanalysis (Laclau 1996a, Stavrakakis 1999, 2007, Glynos and Howarth 2007).

### **b) Echoes of Essex in International Relations**

While critical IR has been aware of the defining works of Laclau and Mouffe, Lacan or Žižek for some time, the literature in its current shape has only started fulfilling the potential of the Essex School. Authors building on the tradition are still scarce and their work often focuses primarily on theoretical arguments. There are gaps to be filled in terms of empirical work and development of concepts for the specific purposes of international studies, also since there has been little if any interest in foreign policy. Additionally, the vast majority of the scholarship does not follow the advances within the Essex School that have taken place in the last decade. Most authors remain within the parameters of Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, neglecting the later redefinition of subjectivity (or engaging it only to a limited extent) and above all the 'affective turn' that came with it. There are even fewer Lacanian studies and the 'logics approach' of Glynos and Howarth is still waiting for a serious engagement. This having said, interesting works have started emerging in the last few years.

The journey of Laclau and Mouffe's arguments to international studies has been slow. They were included in Edkins' (1999) overview of poststructuralism and referred to in important contributions to the discursive project (Campbell 1998, Weldes 1999, Wæver 2002). However, aside from Doty's work on North-South relations (1996) and Diez's examination of British discourses on the EU (1999a, 2001), there was little elaboration of the conceptual framework throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. This has changed only recently and it is largely through Hansen's *Security as Practice* (2006) that the debate was resuscitated. Besides a number of conceptual articles, often presenting the 'case study' only for the purposes of illustration, there are now a handful of monographs that utilise Laclau and Mouffe's framework in thorough empirical research (Müller 2009, Herschinger 2011, Barnard-Wills 2012, Strange 2013, Nabers 2015). For heuristic purposes, this literature can be split into two groups, according to whether its focus is more on the construction of identities or rather the establishment of regimes and hegemonies.

The first group is interested in the construction of identities. A number of studies have focused on nation states. Nabers (2009) and Solomon (2009) explore the construction of the United States' identity in various discourses of the 'War on Terror', whereas Müller (2008, 2009) and Morozov (2008) turn to Russia's great power identity and the effects it has on her relations with the world. There are also analyses of supra- or international identities. Doty

(1996) maps the reproduction of 'the North' and 'the South' in global interactions of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, whilst Hansen (2006) is interested in the constitution of 'the West' in the Bosnian War. Diez (1999a, 2001) interrogates the construction of the European Community in British discourses, whereas Rogers (2009) tracks the change of the EU's security identity from 'civilian power' to 'global power'. Glasze (2007) observes the emergence and development of Francophonía as a construct. Strange (2011a, b, c, 2013) has examined the constitution of the WTO and the transnational protest movement against it. On a yet different note, Barnard-Wills (2012) has shown how British governmental discourses and practices led to the emergence of a 'surveillance identity'.

The second body of work examines the constitution of international regimes and hegemonies. Herschinger (2011, 2012, 2013) compares the UN debates on drugs and on terrorism over the last five decades, showing how hegemony was achieved in the former and not in the latter case. Nabers (2010) combines Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory with other inspirations in order to shed light on the rise of new leaders in international politics. In a recent book (Nabers 2015), he further analyses the relationship between crisis and change in world politics, both theoretically and on the example of the US War on Terror. Methmann (2010b) approaches 'climate change' as an empty signifier and illuminates how it was incorporated into the hegemonic discourses of 'growth' and 'free trade'. Similarly, Methmann and Rothe (2012) show how macro-securitisation of climate change was not accompanied by exceptional measures, but rather translated into specific technologies of risk.

These publications are important as they open conversations and demonstrate how the Essex approach may be used in studying the international. However, their limit is the indebtedness to the original framework of Laclau and Mouffe and the neglect of its later revisions. This is important above all with respect to the key problem of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, which is its conception of subjectivity as mere position within the discursive structure (see Žižek 1990). This notion neglects the bodily, unconscious or affective side of subjectivity and thereby fails to address important aspects of the socio-political. Laclau acknowledged this critique himself and gradually incorporated the Lacanian 'split subject' into his later work (especially Laclau 2004, 2005), which has been further developed above all by Jason Glynos and Yannis Stavrakakis. IR scholarship building on the original 1980s argument of Laclau and Mouffe is thus limited by its problematic conception of subjectivity and the neglect of relations between the discursive and the affective. This is true also for two of the most elaborate, relatively recent and theoretically very similar books by Herschinger (2011) and Nabers (2015), which both follow Laclau's argument to its later revisions and even

include some Lacanian themes (via Laclau), but still fail to include affect in their conceptions of subjectivity and discourse.

In contrast, the body of literature following Lacan and Žižek offers a richer and more complex take on subjectivity. Nevertheless, the diffusion of Lacanian thought to international studies has been even slower. For a long time, Jenny Edkins was largely isolated in advocating the argument. This is not to say that there was no other work at all, but rather that it relied on the psychoanalytical impulse only selectively (e.g. Rubenstein 1989, Debrix 1999, Chan 2003). It has been only recently that IR scholars returned to Lacan in order to tease out the potential of his ideas. The strongest limitation of this small literature is that its focus is largely conceptual and theoretical. Zevnik (2009) has offered a refined take on the possibility of resistance, as well as another piece criticising the political ontology of the human rights discourse in relation to the Guantanamo base (2011). Arfi (2010) has deployed the concept of fantasy to criticise Wendt's constructivism. Similarly, Epstein has attempted to remedy the issues in constructivist and rationalist IR by promoting the Lacanian split subject (2011), arguing elsewhere that the foundational texts of Hobbes are actually perfectly commensurable with this conception (2013).

The Lacanian stream in international studies closely relates to the Essex School, as the psychoanalytical concepts were adopted largely via Slavoj Žižek, whose debates with Ernesto Laclau crucially impacted the work of both authors. A new body of work has emerged from the Laclau/Žižek interaction, which adapts the theories of the both authors for the purposes of social analysis. The most elaborate examples of this stream are Stavrakakis' (2007) advanced and explicit theorising of the marriage of psychoanalysis and discourse theory and Glynos and Howarth's (2007) elaboration of 'logics of critical explanation'. However, IR scholars have only started engaging with these efforts and much more work is needed. Methmann et al. (2013) praise the epistemological value of 'logics', while Müller (2013) explores the affective aspects of identification with the state in the context of a Russian elite university. Hawkins (2015) deploys the logics framework to analyse the UK's European policies. Most developed and closest to this thesis is Ty Solomon's work on neoconservatism and the 'War on Terror', as developed in a series of articles (2012, 2013a, b, 2014) and, eventually, a book published when the bulk of this thesis was already written (2015). Solomon's work certainly qualifies my claims to novelty, also due to his interest in US foreign policy. While working from a virtually identical perspective, however, this thesis still differs in two fundamental aspects. First, Solomon offers little theorisation of foreign policy and his analysis is devoted to the traditional structural focus on the construction of a discourse. Second, analysing merely a handful of key speeches, he offers a sophisticated interpretation, but one that is backed up with relatively little empirical evidence. Therefore,

while certainly not a lonely pioneer, this thesis enters waters that have been charted only sporadically.

## **Conclusion**

I have reviewed the three largely disconnected literatures on Germany, foreign policy and the Essex School in order to start building this dissertation as a quilting point that binds them together. The literatures on Germany's policies and discursive foreign policy were criticised mainly on ontological and epistemological grounds. The main issues identified were the relationships between continuity and change, structure and action, discourse and affect, or critique and explanation. In building an alternative approach to these dilemmas, it is imperative to start from a detailed discussion of my own onto-epistemological assumptions and construct a framework that will address these problems. This is the purpose of Chapter 3, which operates on the level of social/political theory and presents a 'grammar of concepts' (Glynos and Howarth 2007) based on the Essex School. These arguments will then be taken back to the literatures on Germany and foreign policy theory respectively, and articulated with them in order to find a solution to the problems discussed in this chapter.

### **3 | The logics approach**

#### **Discourse, affect and critical explanation**

In this chapter, I will engage with the Essex School of discourse theory in order to spell out my ontological and epistemological assumptions and present the concepts that will guide my analysis. Some of the notions I will use are not very familiar in IR, for instance affect, logics or fantasy. Others, notably discourse, are used heavily, yet in different, often contradictory ways. Discourse can refer to anything from a mere conversation to a relational system of words, practices and objects (for overviews see Fairclough 1992, Howarth 2000). Such diversity invites confusions and misunderstandings. Therefore, and because of the importance of ontology and epistemology in my critique of the existing literatures, I will take the labour of presenting the argument in detail. At a time when there are few theoretical standards that would be shared or undisputed, thorough reflection on one's own framework is crucial in the struggle to persuade readers, which, as I will show in this chapter, is the closest we can get to 'truth'.

While borrowing heavily from the Essex tradition, above all from Ernesto Laclau, David Howarth, Jason Glynos and Yannis Stavrakakis, my relationship to this body of work is creative and open-ended. I claim no originality regarding the broader arguments or the concepts I appropriate. But I am also not merely taking a few tools in order to apply them mechanically to my own field. Not only would that be naïve, but it is not even possible. Appropriation of a concept or argument is always an act of articulation, in which neither the concepts nor the phenomena explained through them remain unchanged. I choose the concepts which I deem useful for my own work, occasionally redeveloping and modifying them, linking them to an explanatory framework, translating them to the language of International Relations, and eventually using them to shed light on empirical phenomena. All these steps include the taking of contingent decisions. Therefore, my relationship to the Essex School is one of interpretation and creative appropriation; it provides me with the language that, hopefully, enables me to say something interesting and important.

The chapter proceeds in three steps. In the first section, I will focus on ontology and present the case for binding discourse and affect together. I will elaborate on what is meant by 'ontology' in the first place, following with the discussion of the key problems of discourse, power and subjectivity. The second section will focus on the concept of logics as a way of operationalising the ontological argument. After a general definition, I will move to the different logics – social, political and fantasmatic – and debate each of them in detail. The third section will address epistemological issues and situate logics as the basic units of

explanation within the broader post-positivist terrain. I will introduce the ‘retroductive circle’ as a distinct mode of inquiry, break it down into its different stages and relate it to the central issues of truth and critique.

### **Ontology: Discourse and affect together**

Before I start carving out the basic concepts, it is necessary to ask what exactly is meant by ontology. The Essex School here builds upon Heidegger’s distinction between the ontical and the ontological. An *ontical* inquiry is one that deals with “particular types of objects and entities” that we focus on in our analyses – the “furniture of the world” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 11, 108, 160). The ontical level is thus that of the ‘actual reality’ of a particular discursive order. The question we ask is what is in the world for us to look at. The *ontological* question, however, is a different one, it digs deeper and asks for the conditions of possibility, the “categorical preconditions for such objects and their investigation” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 108, Laclau 2000a: xi). The ontological question thus deals with the principles upon which discourses – including subjects, objects and practices – are constituted as such, what holds them together and what penetrates and disrupts them. As opposed to pure philosophy, social research of course deals with ontical phenomena, such as foreign policy of a nation-state in this dissertation. The trick is not to discard the ontical level, but to construct concepts which will be able to travel between both dimensions of inquiry. While looking at the behaviour of particular subjects or the structuring of specific discourses, we should also take into account the preconditions of their very constitution.

The starting point for a general ontological reflection, which covers the first part of this section, is the assumption that “any social whole results from an indissociable articulation between signifying and affective dimensions” (Laclau 2005: 111). This version of discourse theory thus builds not only on the linguistic turn, but also on the preoccupation with affects, passions, desires and emotions that has recently found its way both into poststructuralist theory and into IR (for reviews see Howarth 2013: 164-182, Bleiker and Hutchison 2014). In order to account for the interplay of the discursive and the affective, Glynos and Howarth bring the ‘post-Saussurian ontology of signification’ (discursive dimension) and the ‘Lacanian ontology of enjoyment’ (affective dimension) together into an *ontology of lack*, built around the central concept of radical contingency (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 14, 107-9). While contingency points to the plain assertion that any “organizing system represents only one way of organizing social relations amongst others” (ibid.: 104), or, put bluntly, that things can be different, it is the *radical* that needs to be highlighted. It suggests that things can *always* be different, that non-necessity and indeterminacy are all-pervasive features of

social relations (ibid.: 109). The world ‘as it is’ is only one possible way it could be, since it is nothing but a result of previous articulations. Both the discursively constructed ‘reality’ and the equally constituted subjects are marked by this contingency. They are structurally incomplete; a *lack* – of a determining principle, of a centre, of a full and stable identity – is inscribed into their very core. The other side of this lack is the *excess* of all other possibilities that remains excluded from it.

How can we conceptualise this curious and abstract dialectics between lack and excess? Let me start from the basic argument of discursive poststructuralists that our social life is lived strictly within the symbolic order of discourse, that is within a meaningful system of relations into which we are born and socialised and which provides for our identities. This notion of discourse introduces a radically constructionist and social ontology and rejects any sort of essentialism and individualism. However, it also poses the problem of the limits of symbolisation, of that which exceeds the discursive. Think about the mundane sensory experiences of everyday life. How does it feel to cut yourself accidentally, to see your team score a goal, to mourn a dead friend? Of course, many answers are available, but they are all essentially foreign. Signifiers such as ‘painful’, ‘happy’ and ‘sad’, on which we try to hook the experience, do not belong to us; they are features of language and discourse which precedes us. Experience exceeds what can be symbolised in discourse (Stavrakakis 2007). This excess can never be fully domesticated and thus always threatens and subverts discursive order, but also makes it possible as it contains the potential for new articulations.

Lacan had a name for this unfathomable excessive dimension: *the real*. In opposition to the discursively constructed ‘reality’ (what Lacan calls *the symbolic*), the real is defined negatively as “the unsymbolizable part of experience” (Stavrakakis 2007: 6), as “what does not fit into the symbolic, what escapes the logic of the signifier” (Fulka 2008: 143). The effects of the real are ambiguous: the real can both disrupt a discourse as well as support and fortify it (Žižek 1991: 29). This helps us to differentiate between two modalities of the real (Stavrakakis 2007: 71). On its negative side, the real is the disruptive limit of discourse, the lack or void that threatens and subverts discursive orders. It can be thought of as a ‘black hole’ (Žižek 1991: viii), something with a strong force whose presence can be determined only from its disruptive effects. In its positive modality, in contrast, the real manifests itself as what Laclau (following Freud) calls *affect* and what Lacan called *enjoyment (jouissance)*;<sup>8</sup> an intensive, amorphous and largely unconscious bodily intensity (Holland and Solomon 2014: 264), or a ‘quantum of libidinal energy’ that circulates through bodies (Glynos and

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<sup>8</sup> I am using both terms interchangeably, but, in line with the existing terminology in IR and social sciences, I refer to affect more often. Importantly, enjoyment is not synonymous to pleasure, since its intense experience is painful at the same time. Enjoyment is thus best understood as unconscious “pleasure in displeasure, satisfaction in dissatisfaction” (Stavrakakis 2007: 78).

Stavrakakis 2008: 267). Affect/enjoyment is non-discursive itself, but it can be translated into discourse in a positive and substantive manner – for instance as emotions or fantasies.<sup>9</sup>

Discourse and affect are thus tightly related and overlapping. They are always present together and mutually contaminate one another; they are “distinct but interpenetrating fields” (Stavrakakis 2007: 96).<sup>10</sup> Laclau (2004: 326) offers a helpful heuristic distinction between the signifying *form* and the affective *force* of discourse.<sup>11</sup> The relation between them is one of mutual influencing, in which neither side is fully autonomous or privileged over the other (therefore, it is not a crude binary that would be easily vulnerable to the sort of deconstructionist critique I have deployed in the previous chapter). On the one hand, affect can certainly be seen as primary in the sense that it is the affective investment that holds discursive orders together in the first place. Without the body and affect as a key aspect of the corporeal, there would be no signification. On the other hand, however, affect is not purely physical, but rather ‘biocultural’ (Holland and Solomon 2014). Affective experiences are discursively conditioned, framed, provoked, and therefore also governed by discursive means. In other words, we are taught how to feel in a certain way in the process of socialisation. We make sense of the corporeal experience of affect by transforming it into emotions, such as ‘love’ and ‘anger’, which are already meaningful and can be dealt with. It is precisely this process of channelling the affective energy that explains the resonance and durability of discourses and identities. The successful ones are those that manage to rally affective support onto their signifying structures. The relation between discourse and affect is thus also necessarily a power relationship as it is constitutive of identities as central pillars of social orders. I will now expand on these arguments in more detail.

### **a) Discourse and power**

In international studies, discourse is typically used either ambiguously, or in a fashion that equalises it with the linguistic dimension of social relations, broadly synonymous to “spoken or written language use” (Fairclough 1992: 62, see also Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams 2015). In contrast, Laclau and Mouffe extend the concept of discourse to comprise all aspects of ‘social reality’ as a relational play of signifying elements, be they words, actions or objects (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 107). In other words, social analysis is first of all analysis of relations and of the constitution of meaning on the level of the signifier. That is not by a reference to the ‘real thing’ of the signified (the sound ‘horse’ as somehow linked to

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<sup>9</sup> The difference between affects and emotions is that emotions are already woven into the fabric of discourse, they are “the ‘feelings’ that signifiers ‘represent’ once we attach them to affects” (Solomon 2012: 919).

<sup>10</sup> It is thus important not to slide towards essentialism and biological determinism in which discourse would be reduced to mere effect of the bodily and the affective (Stavrakakis 2007: 95, Epstein 2015).

<sup>11</sup> I have been influenced by Stavrakakis’s (2007: 66-108) commentary on Laclau’s position.



the creature of flesh and bones), but by its entanglement into a web of other signifiers (horse as ‘animal’ and ‘transport vehicle’ that is not a ‘dog’ and not a ‘car’ and so on). Signification, however, is not reduced to written and spoken language. Not only words, but also images, objects or practices can be analysed in terms of signification, since their identities and social meanings also result from their contingent articulations into a web of relations that constitute the broader discursive network.

Discourse is thus much more than language, it is a ‘structured totality’ (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 105), in which “language, actions and objects [are] intertwined” (Griggs and Howarth 2011: 219, Laclau 2005: 68). To counter the usual critique, this does not mean that the world is reducible to language and social research to textual analysis. Instead, it is a proposal to analyse the social *as if* reading a text: by examining the playful relations between different types of signifiers, the stability as well as ambiguity of the meanings produced and the power behind it. Once relations are at the heart of the analysis, the usual binaries between ‘words’ and ‘deeds’, or the ‘linguistic’ and the ‘material’ start to break down, because discursive orders are produced *equally* by what we say, what we do and the material context within which we live. To demonstrate this intertwining of language, actions and objects, Laclau and Mouffe (1990) use the Wittgensteinian example of two cooperating bricklayers. Rather than analyse the demand ‘pass me a brick’, the actual passing of the brick and the very materiality of the object separately, it makes much more sense to focus on the overall meaningful practice of building a wall to which all the three aspects contribute.

The concept of discourse thus captures different types of elements linked together in a contingent order. However, this also necessarily means that every order relies on exclusion. For signification to function (e.g. that we understand what ‘freedom’ means), there must be certain fixity in the relations between the elements of discourse. Some meanings thus always have to be excluded (e.g. the notion of ‘freedom’ as realised only within a unified *Volksgemeinschaft* is excluded from a liberal democratic discourse). For this purpose, distinction needs to be drawn between particular discourses and the broader field of discursivity (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). Discourses are always concrete, historically specific systems of relations and are constituted on the ontical level. In contrast, discursivity is an ontological category, capturing the general claim that “every object or any symbolic order is meaningful, that is, situated in a field of significant differences and similarities.” (Howarth 2010: 313) The field of discursivity is the theoretical horizon, highlighting that no discourse can ever succeed in exhausting all meaning within its closed system. As different options are always possible, every single discourse is inherently unstable, incomplete and vulnerable to the – possible or actual – competition of other discourses (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 113).

The unstable and exclusionary character of all discourses connects the discussion to the very core concept of political analysis: power. There is nothing necessary about the constitution of discourses. On the very contrary, they are contingent results of articulations, through which discourses are produced and reproduced. Articulations are always already embedded within discourses, but since these are incomplete – lacking – and unstable, each articulation is also always a decision that exercises a degree of freedom with both productive (re/creation of a discourse) and repressive effects (exclusion of other possibilities). Therefore, power and politics can be reconceptualised in terms of constructing relations between discursive elements, so that some subjectivities and policies are excluded, whereas others become possible and even ‘natural’. Such a notion of power heavily borrows from Foucault’s (1978, 1979), since it is decentred, intertwined with knowledge and representation, circulates through society and is productive of not only social relations, but also of the very subjectivities that engage in them.

Laclau’s thinking on power is condensed in the – notoriously ‘multifaceted’ (Howarth 2013: 199) – concept of *hegemony*, broadly defined as a strategic situation in which “a certain particularity [...] assumes the role of an impossible universality” (Laclau 2005: 115). Particular meanings, relations, identities and political projects lose their partial and fragmentary character and impose themselves as universal, natural and necessary, while the contingent and political moment of their institution disappears. For Laclau, discursive relations thus oscillate between the dimensions of *the social*, in which discursive constructions are sedimented and taken for granted so that they “assume the form of a mere objective presence” (Laclau 1990: 34), and *the political*, in which orders are created, reproduced, challenged and subverted. This distinction is by no means strict and the border between the political and social is in fact political itself and constantly shifting (Laclau 1990: 35, Glynos and Howarth 2007: 117). However, the analytical differentiation allows me to separate two different dimension of hegemony: hegemony as a state of affairs and hegemony as a political process.

By the notion of *hegemony as a state* I refer to a situation, in which a discourse dominates the whole discursive field in particular historical, cultural or institutional contexts. Its particularity imposes itself as a ‘natural’ state of affairs, ‘common sense’ or Laclau’s ‘mere objective presence’ (Laclau 1990: 34). Mouffe’s use of hegemony is very close to the ‘static’ aspect, when she defines it as the “point of convergence – or rather mutual collapse – between objectivity and power” (2000: 99). Two important problems arise. First, how to conceptualise hegemonic states if discourses are inherently unstable and if, as Foucault (1978) put it, the exercise of power is always intertwined with practices of resistance? There are no perfect instances of wholly hegemonic discourses, but this does not hinder the utility

of the concept *in relation to particular contexts*. Hegemonic state is the ideal-typical pole on the one end of a sliding scale and the question is rather *to what extent* is a discourse hegemonic in a particular field. Second, what are the criteria to judge the extent to which a hegemonic state has been achieved? I take discourse as hegemonic if (1) it becomes materialised in broadly used practices, objects and institutions, and if (2) there is either lack of political contestation, or all arguments need to draw on the basic vocabulary of the discourse in order not to get marginalised (Hajer 1995: 60-61, Glynos and Howarth 2007: 14, Methmann and Rothe 2012: 325, Martilla 2013: 10-11).

*Hegemony as a process*, in contrast, refers to the articulatory practices whereby social orders are challenged or defended in political struggles. Hegemony is thus the political “*operation of taking up*, by a particularity, of an incommensurable universal signification” (Laclau 2005: 70, *emph. added*). In processual terms, hegemony thus refers to the way how different political projects struggle over the imposition or preservation of hegemony as a state of affairs. Howarth (2013: 199-208) further splits this in two different modalities. First, hegemony is a practice of coalition-building, whereby different elements – signifiers, political demands, identities – are linked together into universalising hegemonic projects (‘hegemonising projects’ would probably be more accurate), which challenge the status quo and aspire for the imposition of a new hegemonic state. Second, hegemony also refers to the defence of the status quo. Therefore, it is also a form of governance, which attempts to separate political demands and challenges from one another, address them individually and deal with them within the existing discursive order so that radical challenge is prevented or absorbed. Different aspects of hegemony will be further clarified in the discussion of logics later in this chapter. For now, it suffices to conclude that politics can be reconceptualised as the interaction between the different aspects of hegemony, as a struggle of subversive as well as defensive hegemonic practices for the achievement of a hegemonic state.

## **b) Subject**

Even though the previous paragraphs have already been influenced by Lacanian thought, it is the particular conception of subjectivity that makes the psychoanalytical contribution most recognisable. For Lacan himself, “the elaboration of the notion of the subject” was the very central aim of psychoanalysis (Lacan 1977: 77). This approach is part of the broader theoretical stream that decentres the subject and rejects the Cartesian notion of the coherent and self-transparent subject as the sovereign creator of social relations (for a discussion see Edkins 1999). At the same time, Lacanians also refuse to reduce the subject to a mere effect of the structure or a place within it (subject position) as structuralists and some

poststructuralists suggest.<sup>12</sup> Subject positions are indispensable in showing the discursive dependence of subjectivity and the power relations operating in its constitution. However, they fail to account for the affective dimension of subjectivity, which is the locus of the real and plays an important part in the reproduction and transformation of discursive orders. The Lacanian subject, in contrast, is conceptualised as both (1) *thrown* into discourses upon which it relies for its constitution and (2) “constitutively *split* between its symbolic and affective sides” (Glynos 2010: 19, *emph. added*).

The notion of a *thrown subject* rests on the assumption that it is only within the symbolic order of discourse that our very subjectivity is constituted; we are literally thrown into discourses, which are already structured at the moment of our entry. This happens the first time when a child learns to speak and becomes a subject by recognising their name, but we face analogical situations many times in our lives. The child becomes a ‘subject of the signifier’, where its identity as a ‘unique’ and ‘whole’ person is instituted as a retroactive effect of the name (Stavrakakis 1999, Epstein 2011), as well as of the performance of a number of social practices as I would add. Importantly, this stepping into a discourse is a fundamentally traumatic and alienating experience, since the resources upon which we rely for our constitution as subjects – e.g. language, social roles, practices – are foreign to us, they are properties of discourses that long predate us (Epstein 2011: 336). Thousands of other people have the very same given name or play the very same social roles. By the unavoidable step into the discursive order, we appear to lose something. “The subject is doomed to symbolise in order to constitute her- or himself as such, but this symbolisation cannot capture the totality and singularity of the real body, the close-circuit of the drives.” (Stavrakakis 1999: 29) This loss is, once again, inscribed on the subject as a lack, an empty place around which the subjectivity is structured.

As a result of this traumatic constitution, the subject is *split* between two domains. First, it is the discursive subject that is dispersed between different, potentially contradictory subject positions offered by the multiplicity of discourses into which we are entangled at the same time (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 109). Different subject positions are structured around the void at the centre, the discursive subject is therefore a lacking subject. This aspect of subjectivity is what is in international studies usually referred to as identity. Second, however, the subject is simultaneously also the affective subject, the site of the ambiguous and excessive energy that stems from the body. Turning to the affective side explains why some discourses and the subject positions they provide succeed in hegemonising the

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<sup>12</sup> This includes Laclau and Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. It was only after Žižek’s critique that Laclau revised his position in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990) and the subsequent works.

discursive space and impose themselves on a subject, while others do not. The discourses that manage to ‘stick’ or ‘grip’ subjects are those that connect to the affective side and stimulate desire so that the subject *enjoys* identifying with them (Glynos 2001, Glynos and Howarth 2007: 107, Stavrakakis 2007: 21). The central desire of the subject is the desire for wholeness, for covering the lack and recapturing the ‘real’ enjoyment that has been lost upon stepping into the discursive order (Stavrakakis 1999: 42). The subject desires a perfect identity, one that would fully express the affective side in discursive terms so that the two would effectively merge and do away with the split. However, fulfilling this desire is impossible, since the lacking order of discourse can never master the excess of the real. This does not make the desire any weaker. On the contrary, the traumatic lack and the promise of recapturing enjoyment are linked in a mutually reinforcing relationship. As subjects, we are locked in the circle of affective economy, where the experience of lack, the ‘not feeling quite ourselves’, fuels our desire and forces us to search for new subject positions.

The conclusion is that the subject is fragmented not only within discourse (between different subject positions), but also between the discursive and the affective sides. The relation between the subject and discourse therefore cannot be one of externality as in the agency-structure dualism of structuration theory, which I have criticised earlier (for a detailed discussion see Glynos and Howarth 2008, Howarth 2013). Discourse is implicated in the very construction of subjectivity – it provides the form and content, the subject positions. At the same time, discourses exist only in the subjective practices that produce and reproduce them. Discourses and subjects are not independent or autonomous, but intimately interconnected through the ontological lack that permeates and destabilises both of them simultaneously. Instead of ontologically different realms, discourse and subjects are interconnected sites for the intertwining of the discursive and the affective and their necessarily failing struggle to cover over the lack at the heart of subjectivity *and* social reality.

This also allows us to deconstruct the essentialist binary between the collective and the individual upon which constructivism often relies (Stavrakakis 1999: 4, Glynos and Howarth 2008, Solomon 2015: 63). As Epstein (2011) shows, subjectivities are constituted at many different levels from the individual to the state, but the way this is done is always the same. Therefore, there is no principal problem in travelling between the individual and the collective as the two are not different things, but rather constitute themselves as such through the very same intertwining of affect and discourse. The ‘individual’ subject position of a ‘German man’ at the same time presupposes the ‘collective’ subject positions of ‘manhood’ and ‘Germany’. From this perspective, “the individual and the collective levels are not in

fact different levels at all but can instead be viewed as inter-weaving and interdependent registers where no bright line is discernible between the subject and society” (Solomon 2015: 63).

### **c) Dislocation and decision**

The concept of dislocation helps us theorise the interplay between the discursive and the real in actual ontical orders, which, in a second step, also allows us to rethink the issues of agency and decisions. Dislocation is a moment when a discourse is disrupted by the eruption of the real, signification gets interrupted and the contingency of existing structures, identities and practices becomes visible.<sup>13</sup> Something happens so that subjects suddenly experience the lack and do not know how to ‘go on’ (Glynos and Howarth 2008: 162-3). The subject positions we identify with do not seem to provide sufficient direction for our actions any longer and the comfort zone of routinised practices is shattered. There are different sorts of dislocations, ranging from breaks in global orders to those of everyday lives. A very good example of how an experience of dislocation may look like was given by Tony Blair after 11 September 2001: “The Kaleidoscope has been shaken. The pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle again. Before they do, let us re-order this world around us.” (Blair 2001) The quote demonstrates that what follows right after dislocation are attempts to symbolise and domesticate it, make sense of the traumatic experience of the lack and thereby bring it into the realm of discourse, e.g. as a narrative of a ‘crisis’. While we are ‘doomed to symbolise’ (Stavrakakis 1999: 29), there is nothing necessary about the *way* we symbolise and no need that dislocations will result in transformations of orders. For instance, the dislocation posed by the attacks of 11 September 2001 might as well have been written into the then status quo discourse as a criminal action whose executioners should be pursued by means of international cooperation and criminal law.

What is certain, however, is that responses to dislocation require some discursive labour and that they are open to contestation. Dislocation is therefore not only traumatic; it also opens space for new possibilities. “The world is less ‘given’ and must be increasingly constructed. But this is not just a construction of the world, but of social agents who transform themselves and forge new identities as a result.” (Laclau 1990: 40) The cracks in the discursive structure bring in a degree of freedom and agency. A third dimension of subjectivity emerges aside from the discursive subject position and the affective locus of the real: the radical

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<sup>13</sup> There is a certain tension in the concept of dislocation, which Laclau uses both as a permanent feature of social structures, which are always already dislocated (Nabers 2015 uses dislocation in this way), and as a moment when this become visible to subjects (Laclau 1990). I prefer to use the concept in the latter sense, whereas I refer to the related notions of lack and radical contingency to capture the former argument.

subjectivity of decisions, where decision is a “jump from the experience of undecidability to a creative act” (Laclau 1996a: 54). Decisions are thus new identifications (with discourses and practices) that construct the meaning of the situation and the role of the subject in it (Laclau 1990, 1996a, Glynos and Howarth 2007). This is the moment of the political, whereby social orders are reproduced, subverted or transformed through the construction of hegemonic projects. As Laclau (1990: 40) highlights, the more dislocated the structure, the more space there is for agency.

Laclau’s conception of decision here steers between the two criticisms of poststructuralism: that it either offers a voluntarist perspective and fetishizes the moment of decision, or that it provides no meaningful appreciation of agency at all (Howarth 2013: 183-184). Arguably, this is at the price of a highly complex account. I believe this price is worth paying, since the complex theory of decision is a logical consequence of the decentring of the subject. Decision thus has to be analysed along three dimensions, which speak to different aspects of subjectivity. First, it is the Derridean ‘moment of madness’ of radical subjectivity, in which every decision is a contingent leap in the dark that is irreducible to anything external of itself. Second, however, this leap is always happening within discursive structures, which are never *fully* dislocated. It is a leap from one subject position to another: “what counts as a valid decision will have the limits of a structure which, in its actuality, is only partially destructured. The madness of the decision is [...] a regulated one.” (Laclau 1996a: 57) Third, decisions also include the largely unconscious affective force which pushes us to take the leap in the first place. In this sense, it is the experience of “my lack of being” that is “the source of the decision” (Laclau 1996a: 55). To analyse politics, which can also be defined as “the taking of decisions in a contingent and ‘undecidable’ terrain” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 114), we need to account for all the three dimensions of subjectivity and decisions. This is where the concept of logics will be of use.

### **Logics: Putting ontology to work**

In order to translate the ontological argument into an analytical framework, Glynos and Howarth develop and formalise the concept of *logics*, adopted from Laclau and Mouffe (2001) and especially later Laclau (1996b, 2000b, 2005). Logics operationalise the ontological argument and serve as tools for a novel, arguably more comprehensive way of analysing discourse. They are basic explanatory units that help us account for the patterning

and reproduction of discourses and practices<sup>14</sup> (ontical level) while taking into account their ontological conditions of possibility. In general terms,

Logics seek to capture the purposes, rules and self-understandings of a practice in a way that is sensitive to key ontological presuppositions. They aim to assist not just in describing or characterizing it, but in capturing the various conditions which make the practice ‘work’ or ‘tick’, thereby contributing to our understanding of how a practice becomes possible, intelligible and vulnerable. (Glynos 2008: 278)

Logics comprise of the relational set of subject positions, objects, meanings, relations, ideas and institutions that are at play in a particular set of practices or a particular discursive formation. To give an example, ‘logic of market’ constructs ‘buyers’, ‘sellers’, ‘commodities’ and strategies of behaviour. It is clear that ‘stock market’, ‘Christmas market’ and ‘higher education market’ are different things, but also that there is enough in common (‘market’) so that we can generalise nevertheless (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 136). However, this cannot be done on the basis of a higher-order principle of which these examples would be mere manifestations. Instead, it is useful to invoke Wittgenstein’s notion of *family resemblances*, which are commonalities between phenomena that we can only observe rather than deduce and formalise a priori. Discussing what “board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on” may have in common, Wittgenstein concludes: “I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than ‘family resemblances’; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way. – And I shall say: ‘games’ form a family.” (Wittgenstein 2001: §67) In this fashion, we can say that ‘markets’ form a family as well. But it is only through the judgment of the researcher that resemblances are observed and empirical phenomena gathered in families in order to construct the logics that govern them.

Based on the discussion of the different dimensions of subjectivity and hegemony, we can differentiate between *social*, *political* and *fantasmatic* logics. Each of them also refers to a different question regarding discourses/practices and thus offers a different mode of analysing discourse. Social logics help us characterise a discourse or practice (its purpose, form, content, rules), respond to the ‘what?’ question, that is to identify subject positions and account for hegemony in its static sense. Political logics explain the ‘how?’ issues – how practices and discourses are brought into being, as well as contested or defended in the wake of a dislocation. They focus on the radical subjectivity of decisions and shed light on the

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<sup>14</sup> The concept of practice will be discussed in Chapter 4. For now it suffices to say that in the Essex framework – unlike in the ‘practice turn’ – practices are always discursive practices. In turn, discourse is thus also a system of practices.



processual aspects of hegemony. Finally, the logic of fantasy accounts for the affective investment in discourses and practices that pushes subjects to preserve or challenge existing social structures. It revolves around the ‘why?’ questions and captures the force that underpins hegemony in both its static and processual forms.

#### **a) Social logics**

Social logics capture the ontical level and their construction starts from self-interpretations offered within the discourse of our interest. Social logics can be understood above all in terms of rule-following (Laclau 2005: 117, Glynos and Howarth 2007: 137). They recover the meaning and pattern of coherence of a practice, characterise it in terms of a thick description and show what it is about, who participates in it and what is at stake. They capture the sedimented, largely repetitive aspects of life and therefore, they can be seen as portraying the ‘synchronic’ dimension of social relations (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 137, 162) and the static aspects of hegemony. Strictly speaking, social logics are always contextual, since slightly different logics could be constructed for each empirical context that we choose to examine. However, it is upon the analyst to decide what constitutes a context and to point to family resemblances within and beyond it, which enables the drawing of contingent and qualified generalisations (this will be further discussed later in this chapter). Therefore, while subjective self-interpretations provide a starting point, it is upon the researcher to contextualise, categorise and redescribe them in a language that the subjects involved may not use themselves.

Just like every subject identifies with multiple subject positions, every social order can be constituted by multiple social logics. Relations between these different logics are then dependent strictly on their contextual articulation. Sometimes, different social logics may work well together and reinforce one another, just like the logics of ‘atomisation’, ‘competition’, ‘hierarchy’ and ‘instrumentalisation’ which describe the audit regime in UK universities (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 171). At other times, however, the presence of different social logics may result in clashes and tensions. While Glynos and Howarth do not account for this, Laclau (1996b: 8) recognises the possibility and draws the consequence that “the social operation of two incompatible logics does not consist in a pure and simple annulment of their respective effects but in a specific set of mutual deformations.” This is arguably the case with the social logics of ‘democracy’ (defined by popular sovereignty) and ‘liberalism’ (defined by individual rights), which together constitute the order of modern democracies (Mouffe 2000). However, as Mouffe demonstrates, this tension is neither always resolvable, nor necessarily bad, as the experience of such paradoxes can lead to the

acknowledgment of the lack at the heart of all social orders and open space for a productive politics of new articulations.

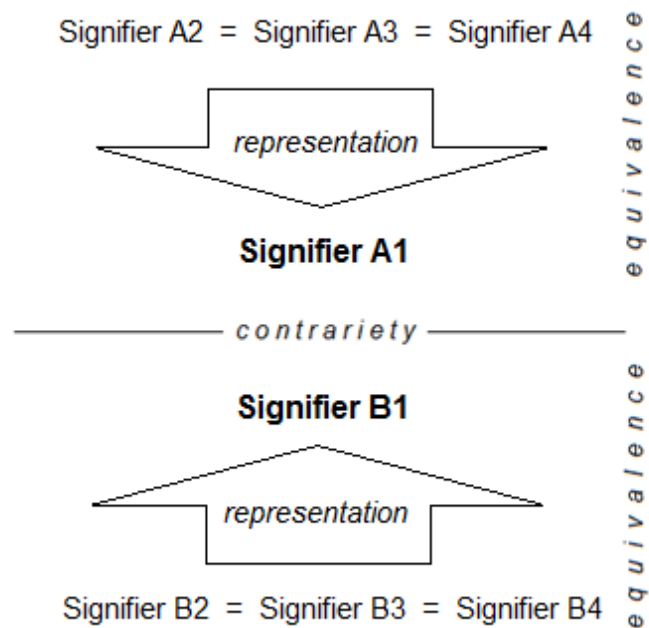
Searching the literature for examples of what could count as social logics of international politics, one theme recurs repeatedly: state sovereignty. As a social logic, we can characterise it by the subject positions it provides (states as the privileged subjects of international politics), objects (national borders dividing the ‘inside’ from the ‘outside’), rules (equality, non-intervention) and practices (border controls, deciding in international organisations on the basis of one country – one vote). The world constructed by the logic of state sovereignty is thus one of truly *inter*-national relations. To illustrate some of the points above, it is clear that state sovereignty plays itself differently across spatial and temporal contexts. Equality and non-intervention meant for Germany and France something else in 1913 and 2013; their current meaning is different for China and for Somalia. But we can also observe family resemblances that allow us to draw connections and generalise. The subjects involved would most likely recognise sovereignty as a governing logic of their interactions; every junior diplomat would affirm this and provide a definition. However, they would not necessarily connect it explicitly to practices of border-controls and most certainly would not conclude that “the principle of state sovereignty expresses an historically specific articulation of the relationship between universality and particularity in space and time” (Walker 1993: 176). That is the task of the analyst.

### **b) Political logics**

Political logics capture the dynamic processes of reproduction, contestation and transformation of discursive orders, which constitute the processual aspect of hegemony. In Laclau’s words, “political logics are related to the institution of the social” (2005: 117). Construction is set in motion when dislocations shatter pre-existing discursive constellations. There are two basic ways in which political logics can work in such a situation. Either they provide what Martilla calls ‘offensive articulations’ (Martilla 2013: 70), which challenge the existing discursive order by the construction of new frontiers and identities (which could then gradually sediment and form new social logics). Or they offer ‘defensive articulations’ (ibid.: 71), which aim at supporting and sustaining the existing discourses by preventing or accommodating the challenges to the existing order of social logics. Such construction always arises from particular empirical contexts and the array of forms it may take is principally infinite. Political logics do not tell us anything about the *content* of the projects that may follow from dislocatory experiences (ontical level). Instead, they are formal constructs that deal with *how* this contestation/preservation happens (ontological level).

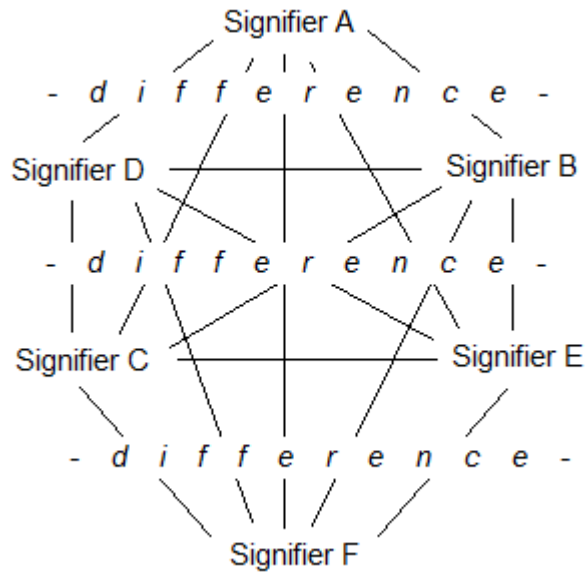
Unlike social logics, political logics are therefore ‘quasi-transcendental’ and ‘diachronic’ (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 137, 141), since the construction of a particular ontical political project that challenges or supports existing social structures is explained in terms of the universal ontological principle of signification. Political logics are therefore *signifying logics*. As there are two basic relations in connecting signifiers in structural linguistics, there are also two basic political logics that articulate signifiers, practices, subject positions or objects in a discourse: *logic of equivalence* and *logic of difference* (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). The idea is simple: the meaning of signifiers is constructed by their entanglement into a web of relations with other signifiers, both in their equivalence in their relation to another signifier (‘Germany’ and ‘France’ as equivalent in relation to ‘Europe’), and their mutual difference (‘Germany’ as different from ‘France’). In political terms, these two logics help us understand the process of the division of socio-political spaces through the construction of new frontiers: “the logic of equivalence is the logic of the simplification of political space, while the logic of difference is a logic of its expansion and increasing complexity.” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 130)

The logic of equivalence splits the political space into two camps by instituting a single, radical boundary along one or more binary constructions – e.g. ‘civilisation’ versus ‘barbarism’, ‘good’ versus ‘evil’. It links the loosened elements into a single signifying chain on each side of the boundary in which all elements would be equivalent; not in some common positive essence, but in a shared opposition to another signifier, which functions as a ‘common enemy’. Beside *equivalence* among the elements that are articulated within the same chain, this logic constructs also the relationships of *contrariety* between the two radically opposed chains, and of *representation*, where one signifier (e.g. ‘terrorism’) comes to represent the whole chain (Martilla 2015). This typically leads to hegemonic projects that challenge the existing orders through the construction of broad discursive coalitions and aspire for radical transformations. Official US discourses in the aftermath of the dislocation of 9/11 are a good example. A radical boundary was introduced, one between ‘us’ and the ‘axis of evil’, which were articulated in a relationship of contrariety. On the side of the ‘evil’, ‘terrorism’, ‘rogue states’ and ‘weapons of mass destruction’ were linked into a single chain, of which ‘evil’ and ‘terrorism’ were representative. The simplifying and unifying logic of equivalence prevailed also on the ‘us’ side, as there were only two options to choose from: either you are ‘with us’ and support the United States, which articulated themselves as representatives of this chain, or you are ‘against us’. The structure of hegemonic projects based on the logic of equivalence is visualised in the following chart.



Discourse dominated by the logic of equivalence (based on Laclau 2005:130; Martilla 2015)

The logic of difference refers to the very opposite process whereby equivalential chains are broken and political spaces reconstructed in terms of a plurality of elements different from one another. The operation of this logic prevents the rise of broad discursive coalitions and radical boundaries. In its absolute form, nevertheless, it would lead to a disintegration of the political space as there would be nothing in common holding the signifiers, subjects and practices together any longer. However, it should not be seen as leading to the disappearance of the political, but rather as preventing revolutionary politics in favour of politics of status quo or gradual reform (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 151). Revisiting the earlier example, the operation of logics of difference is evident in the discourses that reject the binary ‘us’ vs. ‘axis of evil’ construction. This leads to attempts to re-evaluate and address the issues of ‘terrorism’, each of the ‘rogue states’ and ‘weapons of mass destruction’ separately. The radical boundary is broken and different policies are made possible. However, the abandonment of the unified enemy is not without effects on ‘us’. In fact, there is hardly any unified ‘us’ any longer, only a myriad of voices with a number of differential relations to each other. Discourse structured by the logic of difference can be visualised as follows.



Discourse dominated by the logic of difference

Crucially, neither of the two political logics can ever be present without the other one. They cannot prevail in a pure form, as both would lead to the collapsing of language, meaning and social relations: either because all signifiers would effectively become one and the same as there would be no difference between them, or because they would have nothing in common that would hold them together in a discourse. As Laclau argues, “equivalence and difference are ultimately incompatible with each other; none the less, they require each other as necessary conditions for the construction of the social. The social is nothing but the locus of this irreducible tension.” (Laclau 2005: 80) All discourses, social relations and political projects are thus constructed in the interaction of the two logics, resulting in complex and messy constellations in which the relationships of equivalence, difference, contrariety and representation criss-cross and overlap.

### c) Fantasy and the fantasmatic logic

The fantasmatic logic captures the affective dimension of subjectivity and helps to bring the real and affect into the discourse-theoretical framework. A crucial paradox arises here: if the real resists symbolisation, how can we possibly analyse it and write about it? Stavrakakis (1999, 2007) offers a promising solution: the assertion that the real cannot be captured directly does not mean we cannot locate or ‘encircle it’. We should look for the discursive traces it has left, which are to be found in breaks and failures of signification (the negative side of the real, as conceptualised through dislocation), but also in particular signifying structures that positivise the real and translate affect into discourse. In the following paragraphs, I will present the Lacanian notion of *fantasy* as one of such discursive structures

and define it as a narrative that is discursive in form yet structured by and laden with the affective force. Fantasmatic narratives can take on different ontical manifestations, some of which I will illustrate. However, these different contents share the same structure and ontological function, which is to cover over the constitutive lack and stabilise subjects by fostering their identification with discourses. Towards the end, I will also carve out the difference between particular fantasies and the singular logic of fantasy.

Fantasy captures the relations between affect, discourse and subjectivity. It is a narrative “which serves to occlude some original deadlock” (Žižek 1997: 10). This original deadlock is the lack, which the subject experiences when the discursive structure is dislocated. Fantasy emerges to make sense of the situation by promising to recapture the – inherently impossible – full enjoyment of a complete and stable identity. In fantasy, the lack in the subject is externalised by the construction of an object – the *objet petit a*, the ‘object-cause of desire’ (Žižek 1991: 12) – that was supposedly lost upon our stepping into the discursive order and whose recapturing would lead to fullness and harmony. Crucially, neither the object precedes the desire it attracts, nor does the desire precede its object. “[D]esire poses retroactively its own cause” (Žižek 1991: 12) and the two thus come into being at the very same moment, in which the amorphous affect is translated into the socially constructed desire for a particular discursive object. Fantasy thus connects the split subject to the discursive object in a narrative that promises to reunite the two and reach the full enjoyment of this imaginary unity.

However, the problem is that the object is unattainable and the desire it stimulates is thus unfulfillable (Žižek 1989, 1997, Stavrakakis 1999, 2007). There is always much more in our fantasising than the object itself can give us, because “we presuppose a hidden and intangible object in tangible and recognizable objects” (Cederström and Spicer 2014: 196). Many different things can stand in the place of the desired *objet petit a*, for example consumer goods, sexual partners or political goals expressed by concepts like freedom, security or justice. In the end, however, the objects we actually reach for turn out not to be the ‘real thing’, because there are always new and better consumer goods to own, more attractive partners to have and the democracy, security or justice we obtain is always qualified. The relationship between desire and lack is thus a dialectical one: lack stimulates desire, which only leads us to rediscover the lack and to desire new objects that would fill it (Stavrakakis 2008: 1042, Müller 2013: 280). However, while the search for the ultimate enjoyment must always end up in disappointment, we still gain something through the acquirement of these ‘false’ objects: the partial affective enjoyment of the body, which results from consumer products, sexual relationships or partial political successes. These small doses are crucial for

keeping the affective economy in motion, since they persuade us that the ‘real’ and full enjoyment that fantasies promise us may still be possible somewhere and somehow, regardless of all the previous failures to reach it (Stavrakakis 2007: 196-197).

Fantasies thus help explain why and how some discourses manage to attract the affective force behind their signifying form. Discourses stick and grip subjects by the promise of overcoming the lack through the construction of objects of desire and fantasmatic scenarios of how to reach them. But how precisely can we characterise and recognise a fantasy? Glynos (2008: 287) offers three core features. First, fantasies have the narrative structure of an ideal and an obstacle to it that projects both beatific and horrific consequences. Second, they typically contain transgressive, inappropriate and often contradictory elements. Third, fantasies offer subjects a foundational guarantee by providing discursive points of identification and by imposing closure upon the ambiguities of social reality. At the risk of some repetition, I will further develop the concept of fantasy by discussing these three features and couple them with concrete examples.

First, fantasy is a particular type of narrative, one that presents an ideal and an obstacle to it. As Glynos (2008: 283) puts it, fantasy is “a narrative structure involving some reference to an idealised scenario promising an imaginary fullness or wholeness (the beatific side of fantasy) and, by implication, a disaster scenario (the horrific side of fantasy)”. Fantasies are fast and clear-cut in defining the problems subjects face, as well as identifying the solutions and their consequences. Take the example of anti-immigrant discourses. The sense of a crisis (experience of lack) is channelled into immigrants, who are blamed for problems ranging from unemployment to moral decline. Immigrants play the role of the obstacle to the realisation of the ideal of national or cultural renewal. According to this fantasy, the solution (attaining the *objet petit a*) is clear: immigration needs to be stopped if not reversed. Moreover, such action is long overdue. If ‘we’ act now, the beatific scenario can still be reached. If not, ‘we’ will face the horrific consequences of becoming foreigners in our own country.

Second, fantasies contain a transgressive element. They support particular discourses and identities by presenting an ‘obscene supplement’, something inappropriate and ‘between the lines’ (Žižek 1997: 25, 2005a). This transgression is often linked to the notions of ‘excessive enjoyment’ or ‘theft of enjoyment’, in which someone is painted as enjoying themselves beyond measure and at our expense, showing us that the ‘real’ enjoyment is available after all, it has only been stolen by the antagonistic ‘other’ (Žižek 1991: 165, Stavrakakis 2007: 197). In anti-immigration discourses, this is visible in the preoccupation with excessive sexuality, for example in the reoccurring scare of immigrants raping the local women, or

with the obsession with high natality of the incoming population. Interestingly, this does not prevent the simultaneous construction of the immigrants, in particular Muslims, as excessively religious and opposed to the 'decadent' sexual lifestyle of Western societies. This illustrates another important point, namely that fantasies are often contradictory, since their purpose is "not rational argumentation, but the organization and administration of enjoyment" (Stavrakakis 1999: 109). Seeing the Muslim immigrant as *both* sexually hyperactive *and* ascetically religious thus only attracts a double dose of affective investment.

Third, fantasies provide subjects with a foundational guarantee. They reduce anxieties stemming from dislocations of the discursive structures within which we live by showing subjects 'their place' – an apparently stable and safe identity (in the fixation on the *objet petit a*). In contrast to the common use of the word, fantasy is thus not necessarily an illusion or daydreaming and does not stand in opposition to 'reality' in the sense that ideology and reality are opposed in Marxist theory. Žižek deconstructs this binary to argue that fantasy helps construct subjects' realities, it is "the support that gives consistency to what we call 'reality'" (Žižek 1989: 44). Fantasy helps us to simplify our everyday experience by providing a clear-cut picture of the world. It tells us who we are by connecting past, present and future into a coherent story. The complexity, fluidity and pace of societal transformation make it very difficult to 'know one's place'. Anti-immigrant fantasies can easily provide this sense of place by carving out clear binaries and interpellating subjects: suddenly 'I' recognise that 'I' am a proud European-Christian-nationalist defending my values.

This third aspect reveals the main political function of fantasies, which is the imposition of closure. Exploiting the desire to achieve full and stable identities, fantasies force one-dimensional 'black and white' schemes onto our essentially ambiguous and elusive experience. In simple terms, we want things to be clear and easy. We want to be sure who we are and fantasies help us to achieve just that. However, no closure can ever be definitive since discursive structures can always be disrupted. We can never be truly ourselves as there is always something exceeding this identity as well as something missing. Nevertheless, as I have already shown, this does not make closure and the achievement of a 'full' identity any less desirable. On the contrary, fantasies can imprison us into a vicious circle if we become overinvested in them, one of eternal oscillation between lack and desire, between the promise of full enjoyment and its partial, ultimately dissatisfying bodily manifestations.

While the number and variety of fantasies (ontical level) is infinite in principle, their logic (ontological level) is always the same. *Logic of fantasy* can be thus formalised as a single logic with a plurality of manifestations that captures the extent of subjective attachment to fantasies. This logic is operative "when a subject is over-invested in a fantasy, so that



anything which destabilizes or hints at destabilizing a subject's fantasmatic narrative, is experienced as a threat and provokes anxiety" (Glynos 2008: 289). Similarly to political logics, the logic of fantasy is also a 'quasi-transcendental' formal construct that connects the ontical and the ontological. It shows us how affect/enjoyment (ontological level) is translated into particular fantasies (ontical level) in order to conceal the ontological lack. This, in turn, tells us why certain discourses and subject positions stick – because subjects are gripped by fantasies that support these constructions. While the question of ethics and critique will be discussed later, it should be noted here that the ethical imperative of the Lacanian approach pushes us to resist the grip of fantasies and the closure they bring.

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The three sets of logics offer a 'grammar of concepts' (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 7) for analysing social and political phenomena in an ontologically rigorous way. Social logics operate predominantly on the ontical level (close to empirical contexts) and help us characterise the pattering and rules of practices. Political and fantasmatic logics are formal constructs that link the dynamics of challenge and change – or absence thereof – to the ontological principles of signification and enjoyment. While social and political logics capture the *form* of discourse and its transformation, the fantasmatic logic focuses on the affective *force* of discourse. While each of the three speaks to a different question (what?, how? and why?), they are intimately related and inter-tangled. Every social logic relies upon and reproduces a political (border construction) and a fantasmatic (affective investment) element. The division is heuristic and was made to allow us to focus on different but equally relevant aspects of discourses and practices, only to bring them together "in an overarching explanatory logic that combines descriptive, explanatory and critical aspects." (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 152) In the remainder of the chapter, I will turn to the epistemological aspects of this logic.

### **Epistemology: Critical explanation**

In a review of Laclau and Mouffe's project, Howarth (2000: 112) argues that its novelty and promise lies in the distinct take on ontology it provides, rather than in the epistemological dimension. A major contribution of Glynos and Howarth's work is that they take their approach also to the epistemological ground. It is a logical consequence of the discussion

throughout this chapter to argue that ontology and epistemology are tightly linked.<sup>15</sup> Questions regarding subjects' relation to knowledge (epistemology) can hardly be asked outside of a particular conception of subjectivity and the social world (ontology). Logics provide the conceptual link between the two. I have gone into considerable detail in showing how they operationalise the ontological principles of radical contingency, signification and enjoyment. In this section I will examine their epistemological status as basic explanatory units and situate them within the broader practice of critical explanation. First, I will follow Glynos and Howarth's (2007) juxtaposition of logics to contextualised self-interpretations and causal mechanisms in order to carve out a distinct position around the concept of articulation. Second, I will present the 'retroductive circle' as a comprehensive research strategy and reflect on some crucial issues such as the validity of results ('truth') and the possibility of a critical intervention.

#### **a) Epistemological status of logics and the centrality of articulation**

In one of their definitions of logics, Glynos and Howarth (2008: 165) explicitly situate them in opposition to concepts from the major epistemological traditions of positivism, critical realism and hermeneutics, that is causal laws, mechanisms and contextualised self-interpretations respectively. It is useful to present their argument in order to see what makes logics specific. Glynos and Howarth's starting point is the rejection of positivism, in particular its tendency to model social research on science and the insistence on predictive capacities. For positivists, explanation and prediction are two sides of the same coin, differing merely in their temporality. Prediction is an explanation of what will happen and explanation shows how what happened was predictable. In contrast, the logics approach is situated within the broad post-positivist camp that decouples the two and refuses to stretch the validity of explanation to the future. Social life is too complex and people – unlike planets or particulars – have a degree of control over their behaviour. They can always change their course of action or behave erratically. In social research, we can explain things only after they have happened. Explanation is always *retroductive* (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 18-48).

Once positivism is dealt with, Glynos and Howarth start carving out their argument within the post-positivist terrain. First they turn to hermeneutics and contextualised self-interpretations as the basic elements offered by this tradition (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 49-82). They are ready to subscribe to the necessity to acknowledge subjects' own meanings and understandings as "human beings are self-interpreting animals" (ibid. : 55). It is

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<sup>15</sup> "[A]ssuming we wish to persist with those categories," as David Campbell (1998: 223) notes insightfully.

indispensable to immerse ourselves in the social world of our subjects, recover the meanings it has for them and represent them in the form of a thick description. However, as analysts we should be able to do more than that. We should reflect on what the subjects themselves are not capable of verbalising, such as the background knowledge driving their practices, the political nature of meaning construction upon which every self-interpretation relies and the dependence of subjects on discourses. We should capture also the broader patterns that emerge from self-interpretations and analyse the way discourses are structured. This is possible only with “concepts and logics not available to social actors themselves” that would allow us to travel between empirical contexts in order to compare and generalise (Howarth 2005: 320).

Second, Glynos and Howarth (2007: 83-102) turn to causal mechanisms as offered by critical realists and neopositivists. Unlike contextualised self-interpretations, causal mechanisms strive for a generalised and transferable explanation and explicitly contain a critical edge. However, whilst these accounts explicitly differ from positivism, they seem to be haunted by its scientist imaginary. Even though mechanisms are not laws of nature as they are not universal and their effects cannot be predicted, they are equally context-independent and subject-independent. They seem to possess an abstract essence that enables them to interact with contextual and subjective phenomena (self-interpretation, objects, practices) without being contaminated by them. Mechanisms and the phenomena they want to explain are linked according to the principle of *subsumption*, that is “an understanding of the relationship between concepts and objects as external to each other, in which objects are gathered under concepts without the object or the concept undergoing any modification during the process” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 16). Where self-interpretations are too close to subjects and contexts, mechanisms are too far away. Thus, while logics share the generalising and critical aspiration of causal mechanisms, they differ in that they are also built from within particular contexts which always contaminate and modify them.

Logics build upon the insights of hermeneutics, critical realism and neopositivism without siding too much with both descriptive particularism and essentialised abstractions. In constructing an explanation, we need to pass through subjects and begin with their own self-interpretations, which are best captured by social logics. However, it is necessary to supplement this by linking empirical phenomena to the ‘quasi-transcendental’ political and fantasmatic logics (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 161). Crucially, the key principle of these two moves is that of *articulation*, in which, unlike in subsumption, all the articulated elements are somewhat altered upon entering the relation. Articulation is a “practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory

practice” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 105). Glynos and Howarth (2007: 180) further break this down and argue that contingency, singularity and modification of elements are the three key features of articulation. As all discourses are constructed through articulations, these three aspects are relevant also for scholarly narratives. Therefore, explanation is a contingent articulatory practice that connects theoretical and empirical elements and modifies both in the process. In contrast to causal mechanisms, in the logics approach “concepts cannot remain fully intact in the process of explaining. This is because the researching subject leaves its trace through acts of judgement.” (ibid.: 186)

Articulation is the most important feature that helps us characterise and distinguish logics as explanatory units. Logics are contingent analytical constructs developed from within particular contexts, which are, nevertheless, transferable as long as the two situations share a family resemblance. ‘Application’ of a logic is an articulation that links concepts and empirical ‘data’ into a signifying chain through the exercise of the judgment of the analyst. Crucially, all elements undergo a certain modification upon entering into this chain. This is equally so for logics, because they are not free-standing and do not exist apart from their manifestations, and for empirical data, since there is no way of approaching them without a theory: by thinking and talking about them, we are already entangling them into theoretical discourses. As logics are basic explanatory units, critical explanation, in turn, is a “critical and articulated assemblage of logics” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 164).

#### **b) Retroductive circle: Problematisation, explanation, persuasion and critique**

How can we characterise the overall research practice of which logics and articulation are the central elements? Glynos and Howarth call for developing a logic of scientific discovery that

involves a to-and-fro movement between the phenomena investigated and the various explanations that are proffered. In this way, an initially chaotic set of concepts, logics, empirical data, self-interpretations, and so on, at varying levels of abstraction, are welded together, so as to produce an account which, if it removes our initial confusion, can constitute a legitimate candidate for truth or falsity. (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 34)

Such a process can be outlined in terms of a *retroductive circle* (ibid.: 19). I have defined retroduction as a mode of explanation typical for post-positivist epistemologies and suggested reconceptualising it in terms of articulation. The idea of a circular movement is inspired by hermeneutics and captured in the ‘to-and-fro’. We start with a particular set of empirical phenomena and then articulate it with our theoretical apparatus in order to offer a

provisional explanation. However, this only leads back to the starting point as we need to reconsider whether our account allows us to say something substantial about the phenomena we started with, whether it works also in other contexts, or whether we should rather discard the explanation and search for a different one. While such movement may be infinite in principle, it is upon the researcher to decide at which point his or her explanation seems to have reached a degree of saturation. It is important to bear in mind that new impulses – be they conceptual or empirical – may always disrupt this temporary equilibrium, since our own discourse is also necessarily contingent and lacking. What the logics framework can offer is therefore nothing more than “a provisional explanation which is deeply aware of its own contingency” (West 2011: 419).

The retroductive circle can be further broken down into the four stages of problematisation, explanation, persuasion and critical intervention (Glynos and Howarth 2007).

First, the idea of *problematisation* suggests that every research project should start with a problem, a puzzle. However, problems are not ‘out there’ waiting to be found and solved. It is rather the analyst who constructs something as a problem. The characteristics that we typically use to define a research problem (anomaly, inconsistency with existing theories, perplexing political consequences) depend on the relational complex into which a norm or practice is articulated. This is always done from a certain theoretical and political position; all knowledge operates from a perspective (Foucault 1977: 156). The construction of something as a problem is therefore both a sociological and a normative enterprise as it suggests not only that something is interesting enough to capture our attention, but also that it is worthy of talking and writing about it, which itself is a form of political contestation (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 116). In social research, we often start by challenging existing accounts of the problem provided by both scholars and practitioners themselves; we depart from ‘problematisations of problematisations’. For instance, in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1978) famously attacks the ‘repressive hypothesis’; what is problematised is the widespread persuasion that sexuality has been repressed and that this constitutes a problem (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 44-7).

The second stage is *explanation*, where a problem is accounted for through thick description, interpretation of subjects’ meanings and entanglement into a web of concepts. In the logics framework, this stage is exhausted by the construction of logics. This has been discussed already and there is no need for repetition. Instead, it is worth reflecting on two other issues. First, in carving out an explanation, an indispensable role is played by our judgement, understood as a ‘situated ability’ acquired by repeated engagement in the research practice (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 184-5). There is no way the subjectivity of the researcher could

be bracketed in order to develop wholly formal and abstract guidelines for deciding ‘what counts as what’, e.g. how to assemble and name a logic or how to identify something as its instance. We need to rely on our experience and intuition, which puts additional emphasis on the following stage of persuasion and justification. Second, depending on the ambition of the project, explanation can be extended to theory construction. The line between the two is blurred. In fact we can say that the two differ basically in the level of generalisation – a theory would tend to deploy more abstract concepts and aspire for a broader relevance.

The third step, *justification and persuasion*, deals with the question of validity – or truth – and thus determines the success or failure of our explanation. Since “[t]ruth is not a feature of externally existing reality, but a feature of language” (Torfing 2005: 13), we need to persuade others about our truth-claims. Persuasion, by necessity, is never purely about reasons and arguments, but also always affective. Some of our assumptions, e.g. with respect to values, rely on nothing but arbitrary and partially inexplicable decisions. Therefore, to some extent, we are persuaded only when we *want* to be persuaded.<sup>16</sup> This does not mean sliding to the allegedly ‘postmodernist’ nihilism of ‘anything goes’ or judging arguments on the basis of whether we ‘like’ them. The assertion that there are no universal or external criteria of ‘truth’ does not mean that anything can count as legitimate knowledge, because the researching subject is always already operating within a particular historically specific set of discourses that offers its own criteria for what can be said and understood as true or false. This is what Foucault (1971) refers to as ‘regimes of truth’. Evaluation of research in terms of good/bad and ‘true’/‘false’ is therefore possible *within* paradigms/discourses to which we are also attached affectively – and it is, in the last instance, upon the community of researchers and practitioners to judge (Howarth 2000: 114, 141, Torfing 2005: 19). In order to qualify as a ‘candidate for truth and falsity’, an explanation indeed needs to follow certain rules, even though these are ‘soft’ and ‘internal’, such as “standards of credibility and consistency, evidentiary support, exhaustiveness, and so on.” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 34)

The fourth stage of the circular movement is *critical intervention*. Critique constitutes one of the three pillars of Glynos and Howarth’s epistemological project, together with thick description/interpretation and explanation in the narrow sense. However, how can we approach critique and link it to our narratives so that it is commensurable with the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this thesis? It is useful to acknowledge that

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<sup>16</sup> This is also Wittgenstein’s argument: “Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and a heretic. I said I would ‘combat’ the other man, - but wouldn’t I give him reasons? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*.” (Wittgenstein 1969: 611-612, cited in Mouffe 2000: 70, orig. emph.)

there are different types of critiques, and refer to the ontical/ontological distinction to draw a line between *normative* and *ethical* interventions. Normative critique is one that operates on the ontical level, while ethical critique relates to the ontological level: “While normative critique takes aim at the substantive *content* of the norms that govern a practice, ethical critique takes aim at the way a subject *relates* to those norms – the mode or ethos of a subject’s engagement.” (Glynos 2008: 276, orig. emph.)

The normative aspect is about the researcher’s judgement based on his or her own beliefs, which are necessarily particular. Contrary to the common persuasion, this is not incommensurable with a poststructuralist point of view. The fact that I take my own political opinions as contingent does not mean that I do not have any, but only that I reject to see them as universally valid. Provided one is transparent about it, there is no need to deny one’s values and opinions. I am happy to admit that one of the motivations driving this thesis is the desire to explore the ground delineated by my – liberal cosmopolitan, if labels are necessary – persuasion that capabilities to intervene on behalf of people being oppressed may constitute a certain responsibility to do so, a responsibility that is complicated, traumatic and ultimately unfulfillable (Critchley 2012), and that on some occasions this may even include waging wars. At the same time, I find it deeply problematic how such a responsibility is articulated in terms of moral certainty, militarist narratives, Orientalist images, or what Žižek (2004a) describes as ‘decaf’ warfare, “warfare with no casualties (on our side, of course)”. Normative critique is implicitly present throughout the research process, already in the construction of a research problem as worthy of contestation.

Ethical critique digs deeper and examines the way of the subject’s identifications with discourses. This conception of ethics follows the discussion of fantasy and the real, since it is defined by subjective relation to lack and closure (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 197-8). An ethical intervention would criticise subjects for identifying in a way that the radical contingency of social relations is concealed. This is typical for subjects gripped by fantasies. Ethical intervention therefore works against fantasies. By *showing* fantasmatic narratives and contrasting them with the ontological lack that they are trying to conceal, it tries to relax their grip in a search for a “post-fantasmatic or less-fantasmatic politics” (Stavrakakis 1999: 120). In the spirit of deconstructive and genealogical enterprises, it points to underlying inconsistencies and marginalised voices to show that things could be different and tries to reinsert pluralities and ambiguities where they have been excluded by hegemonic discourses. Rather than favouring one normative narrative over another, it destabilises the ground upon which all of them are built. As such, it is also necessarily a self-reflexive enterprise. An excellent example of ethical intervention in international studies is David Campbell’s

analysis of the First Gulf War in *Politics without Principle* (1993). Campbell presses the official narratives and finds inconsistencies and ambiguities in central issues including the legal status of the border between Iraq and Kuwait or the precision of the US strikes. What makes his critique ethical is that he is not primarily troubled by a normative belief that the US should have acted otherwise, but rather by the ease with which the official story was imposed. In Lacanian terms, Campbell unveils and disrupts the enjoyment of closure.

## **Conclusion**

Directly related to the central ontological as well as epistemological arguments, logics present the conceptual ‘nodal point’ (Laclau and Mouffe 2001) around which this thesis is structured. They help us operationalise the relationship between the discursive and the affective, which provides a particular resolution of the problems of agency, structure and decisions. They also enable us to bridge critique and explanation, as well as connect the theoretical and the empirical. These arguments have laid the foundations for the first half of the dissertation, as they presented what it is that we should reach for to address the problems discussed in Chapter 2 and proposed some initial illustrations of how this may be done. Thereby, this chapter presents the first step in the ‘to and fro’ movement from the ontological to the ontical, from the conceptual to the empirical and from the abstract to the concrete. The two following chapters will directly expand on the insights presented here and build a bridge to the case study in the latter half. Chapter 4 will examine the related practices of foreign policy and foreign policy analysis and articulate the logics framework within this particular ontical context. Chapter 5 will then develop the ontological and epistemological requirements into a set of research strategies and justify the choices made in the process.



## 4 | Discourse theory and foreign policy

### Foreign policy as articulatory practice

This chapter deals with the questions of what foreign policy ‘is’ and how it can be thought from a discursive perspective. Articulating the insights of existing IR accounts with the logics approach, I will present an ontologically informed conceptualisation of the ontical phenomenon of foreign policy. Therefore, the chapter presents a next step from the general to the particular, because it already unfolds abstract concepts in a particular context – the broad context of foreign policy practices in the current world. It plays a bridging role, mediating between the abstractions of ontology/epistemology and the empirical study in the latter part of the thesis. Arguably, this is the very ground occupied by the field of IR theory, which draws generalisations from behaviour in the (ontical) realm of international politics and to which this chapter speaks and contributes. This contribution, however, does not have the status of a discourse theory *of* foreign policy, which would be comparable to other foreign policy theories. Instead, I am thinking discourse theory *and* foreign policy together, which means that the conceptual tools of the former are developed and unpacked in the ontical-empirical context of the latter. Rather than a closed system of rules and relations, I am offering a set of limited and open-ended generalisations about the way foreign policy is constituted and defined as a research object, how it can be analysed and which patterns can be observed in the current international context.

In the first part, I start from the common assertion that foreign policy is a practice, discussing and clarifying what that means conceptually and asking how the practice of foreign policy can be defined and operationalised. In the second section, I turn to the relation between practice and subjectivity and outline my solution to the problems of decisions and interactions, which, as I have shown earlier, limit the utility of existing discursive accounts. The insights from these two steps are then condensed in the third section, which constructs an agenda for a discourse-theoretical foreign policy analysis and links it to the different stages of critical explanation. Finally, in the fourth part I offer three social logics as the patterns regulating the conduct of foreign policy in the current constellation of international order.

#### **What is foreign policy: Discursivity of practice and possibility of a definition**

The initial challenge is to define what foreign policy ‘is’, so that it can be articulated with the framework that was presented in the previous chapter. This section addresses the conceptual

and definitional issues in three subsequent steps. First, it accepts the assertion that foreign policy is a practice and conceptualises practices for the discursive approach of this thesis. Second, the definition is used to negotiate the dilemma between the state-centric ‘Foreign Policy’ and the critically conceived ‘foreign policy’ that was brought to IR by David Campbell (1998). Third, it shows how these abstract debates can be put into work in concrete empirical operationalisations. These three steps provide us with an initial insight in what foreign policy ‘is’ and how we can analyse it.

First, to the problem of conceptual definitions, discursive scholars of international politics generally agree that foreign policy is a practice (e.g. Campbell 1998, Doty 1993, Hansen 2006). However there is little elaboration and/or agreement on what exactly it means (Bulley 2009: 6). Despite its importance for their research, IR poststructuralists do not typically say much about the concept of practice (exceptions include Doty 1997, Müller 2009, Hansen 2011a). This stands in contrast to the proponents of the ‘practice turn’, above all those building on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (Pouliot 2008, Adler and Pouliot 2011b), who offer extensive definitions and postulate practices as the basic ontological units of the social world. For this tradition, practices are the ‘gluons’ of social analysis (Adler and Pouliot 2011b: 10), which are ‘out there’ in the meanings and doings of social actors regardless of the theoretical perspective one adopts to analyse them. Practice turn theorists define practices as ‘competent performances’ and draw lines between them and other concepts like ‘actions’ and ‘behaviour’. These differentiations are based on a series of binaries, such as articulate versus background knowledge, discursive versus material factors, thought versus action or intentional versus automatic behaviour (Pouliot 2008, Adler and Pouliot 2011b).<sup>17</sup>

While the discursive perspective of this thesis shares the interest in practitioners’ own self-interpretations and the ‘doings’ of the world, it sits uneasily with the reifying and depoliticising idea that practices are available ‘out there’ in the world to be simply read off by the researcher. Practices always rely on meanings, which makes them unapproachable outside of a discursive lens, as well as necessarily ambiguous, unstable, contextual and political (Griggs and Howarth 2011). Delineating a practice is always also a contingent intervention on the part of the observer. Therefore, if practices are always co-constituted by the observer, there is no need for elaborate and exclusive definitions that would split them from other phenomena (e.g. behaviour and action) and it is sufficient to define practice loosely as “a network of activities and intersubjective relations, which is sufficiently

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<sup>17</sup> Comprehensive critical engagement with Adler and Pouliot’s perspective is offered by Ringmar (2014), while important objections from a poststructuralist angle are raised also by Hansen (2011a) and Duvall and Chowdhury (2011).

individuated to allow us to talk about it meaningfully and which thus appears to cohere around a set of rules and/or other conditions of existence.” (Glynos 2010: 31) The most important thing – one where Laclau and Mouffe differ from Foucault, another crucial thinker behind the practice turn – is that all practices are discursive practices (see Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 107). Practices rely on relational discursive articulation for their very constitution and it is because of their discursive positioning that they can signify something – both to the people engaging in them and to the observers trying to make sense of them (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 143 et passim). As all practices contain a connecting (they link together subjects and objects, the past and the future etc.) and an iterable (they are repetitive, but each repetition also brings something new) aspect, all practices are *articulatory practices* (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 113). This conceptualisation can appreciate both of the two necessarily intertwined dimensions of a practice along Laclau’s (1990) distinction between the social and the political. It can capture *both* the sedimented patterns in practitioners’ self-understandings (social logics), in which the Bourdieusians are interested, *and* the unstable, contingent and political nature of meaning-production (political logics).

Therefore, to the second question, such definition of a practice can also serve as a starting point for revisiting the two approaches to foreign policy that were discussed in Chapter 2. I have shown that the arguments of the ‘initial explorers’, especially David Campbell’s, are based on the rejection of the narrow definition of ‘Foreign Policy’ as external relations of national governments and the shift to the broader conceptualisation of ‘foreign policy’ as a widespread practice that produces boundaries and social orders. Can there be a way of overcoming this dichotomy and engaging with the questions of a traditionally conceived analysis – ‘the sources of state conduct’ (Campbell 1998: 137) – while still maintaining the critical impulse of the focus on ‘modes of representations’ and their ‘manifest political consequences’ (Campbell 1998: 137)? Not in the sense of a dialectical synthesis that would offer a ‘better’ conceptualisation of foreign policy. However, that does not prevent us from *negotiating* the two definitions and analysing the elite-centred and state-bound ‘Foreign Policy’ *in terms of* the broader ‘foreign policy’.<sup>18</sup>

Situating the two conceptions against the background of the logics framework, we can say that they operate in different dimensions. The traditional, topographical understanding of foreign policy (‘Foreign Policy’) focuses on the social dimension as it aims to capture

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<sup>18</sup> I am using negotiation in the Derridean sense, as an “incessant movement between the poles of contradiction within a concept” (Bulley 2009: 81). Negotiation “does not seek to dialectically *resolve* these contradictions in a third term [...]. The contradictions are interminable, and there can be no simple ‘third way’ or ‘middle ground’. Rather, negotiation suggests the possibility of particular context-specific decisions.” (ibid., orig. emph.) Conceived in this way, negotiation overlaps with Laclau’s conception of articulation as used in this thesis. Articulations are precisely these singular ‘context-specific decisions’ between the poles of an undecidable aporia.

sedimented entities – practices, subjects, institutions. It analyses the world ‘as it is’, that is the particular hegemonic constellation of a ‘consensus reality’ (Glynos 2014) as described by practitioners and observed by analysts. The functional understanding, in contrast, is interested in the political dimension – the institution and contestation of the social. It highlights how the ‘consensus reality’ is reproduced, naturalised, challenged and subverted. In fact, the difference between the two projects lies in their problematisation, in what is constructed as an issue worth analysing. And this very problem – the practice of foreign policy – is constructed differently. What is at stake here is not a ‘correct’ description of a phenomenon, but the construction of a research object. Provided we consider it important to understand *both* “*how* the subjects, objects and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed such that certain practices were made possible” *and* “*why* [and how] a particular outcome obtained” (Doty 1993: 298, orig. emph.), the logics approach allows us a way of combining the two.

Therefore, I am offering a dual problematisation of foreign policy, one that works *both* within the social dimension of sedimented practices (hegemonic order as a state of affairs) *and* the political dimension of their institution, contestation and political effects (hegemonic struggle as a process). Foreign policy can thus be understood as the practice of external relations of national governments that simultaneously participates in the (re)production of social orders, including the very subjectivities it is supposed to represent.<sup>19</sup> From this perspective, it is perfectly possible to focus on the ‘consensus reality’ for the purposes of describing and explaining a particular foreign policy, identifying the subjects and institutions involved in it and positing the rules around which the practice appears to cohere. This is all captured in the concept of social logics in a way that resembles constructivist and ‘practice turn’ analyses in IR. However, that is only the beginning. As soon as social logics are identified, the attention must turn to the political logics through which the discursive space is constructed and reproduced. And this second step is precisely what Campbell, Doty and other poststructuralists are doing.

Taking sedimented meanings and practitioners’ self-interpretations as the starting point is always already a theoretical move, one that critically adopts the conventional understanding of foreign policy, yet puts it into a broader set of relations and links it to a different ontological framework. There are two related issues that need to be taken into account. First, it is important to question the borders and binaries imposed by subjects’ own definitions. For

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<sup>19</sup> This actually *is* part of Campbell’s project, but one that is pushed to the background by his insistence on the primacy of the broad ‘foreign policy’ and the quick shift from the materials of ‘Foreign Policy’ to other discursive sites, as well as from sedimented patterns to political consequences. Rather than reinventing the wheel, I am only making visible what is already there and developing it further.

example, it is likely that policymakers will insist that there is a difference between the ‘real deeds’ and the ‘mere rhetoric’ or between the ‘actual conduct’ of foreign policy and the ‘posturing’ for the purposes of ‘domestic politics’. However, there is no reason why we should buy into the ontology provided by practitioners as long as our own conceptual framework offers a different one. Practitioners’ meanings need to be *articulated* with our own frameworks. Second, it is necessary to resituate foreign policy practices within the discourses that produce their meaning. Importantly, the very same practice can be embedded in a number of different discourses from a wide range of arenas, with that of policymakers being merely one of them (this is explicitly theorised by Hansen 2006). Our research object therefore needs to be constructed as *a cluster of practices and the discourses they are embedded in*. This is a move that has both explanatory and critical purchase. It allows us to explain tensions and contradictions by pointing to the simultaneous positioning of a practice in different discourses. As practitioners may not be aware or even disagree with what an analyst constructs as the logics of these practices, such embedding is also a critical enterprise that reactivates what is being obscured.

Moving to the third issue, the value of this dual problematisation of foreign policy is that it can negotiate the conceptual dilemmas between the ‘traditional’ and ‘critical’ definitions, but it does not provide answers to the practical questions of how to put this specific understanding to work. We also need a definition of foreign policy that would be utilisable in the research process. However, foreign policy appears to be a rather elusive phenomenon. There is always something more to it than we can encircle – an excess that disrupts the lacking concept. At the same time, labelling something as belonging to the practice of foreign policy – e.g. international summits or military interventions – is rather uncontroversial. While it is very difficult to say what foreign policy ‘is’, it is much less problematic to argue that something ‘counts’ as foreign policy in a particular context. In the following paragraphs, I suggest how practical, research-oriented definitions can be constructed and how this links to the broader issue of negotiating/articulating context-specificity and transferability.

First of all, what kind of a definition is possible within the logics approach? ‘Hard’, all-encompassing and easily transferable definitions that could be simply applied to different contexts are not a good fit as they are grounded in the logic of subsumption that was rejected in Chapter 3. However, being at odds with subsumptive definitions does not mean that we should not delineate what it is that we are looking at. Instead, I suggest an issue-specific ‘soft’ approach as a starting point, one where definition tightly overlaps with operationalisation. Therefore, in line with the logic of articulation, operationalisation should not be seen as an afterthought that merely puts pre-existing concepts to work, but rather as a

crucial step that is partially constitutive of the very concepts. Besides negotiating stability and open-endedness, the pendulum of the 'to-and-fro' has to move also between the 'abstract' concepts and their operational definitions, resulting in their mutual contamination. The centrality of operationalisation also develops the earlier point that practices cannot simply be 'read off' the social world. It is never practices themselves what is observed, but always their instantiations in words, actions or objects. Consequently, operationalisation is above all about delineating which of these articulations count as instantiations of the practice in question. The implication is that we can never reach a satisfactory abstract and closed definition of what foreign policy is. However, that is not something particularly worrying as we can still have context-specific pragmatic definitions for particular empirical cases.

In this sense, foreign policy is always an issue-specific phenomenon. I can give a detailed outline of what I mean by Germany's foreign policy in the Iraq crisis by describing the quantum of articulations from which it was constructed. However, I also want to say something more general than that, something about the practice of foreign policy in different spatial and temporal contexts. While foreign policy is always somewhat specific, it is never purely specific. Every articulation is written into the pre-existing discursive terrain, where "neither absolute fixity nor absolute non-fixity is possible" (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 111). As long as discourses cannot be fully fixed, there is no such thing as pure repetition. Context changes and thus doing the 'same thing' twice is never identical. However, as discourses are also not in flux, there is always also some element of repetition as it is impossible to do anything that would not echo something that has been done before. There are always pre-existing linkages in the chain of signifier that is (re)produced through a certain articulation.<sup>20</sup>

It is these similarities and repetitions that make it possible to say that there 'is' such a thing as foreign policy that can be identified in different contexts. These are the family resemblances discussed in the previous chapter; a set of similarities that we discover only when we look and see (Wittgenstein 2001). In the process of 'looking' into the literature on foreign policy, confronting it with my general knowledge of foreign policies of different countries, as well as a detailed reading into the case examined in this thesis, I am confident enough to say that I can see certain patterns: the self-interpretations that someone is 'doing foreign policy', the institutions involved and the processes invoked, the subject positions provided and the political effects. These patterns, slightly changing from case to case, constitute the 'soft' definition that enables us to meaningfully speak of 'foreign policies' – analogically to the earlier examples of 'markets' and 'games'. At the same time, it implies that there will always be a gap between the context-specific operational definition and the

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<sup>20</sup> This is precisely the case that I raised against the continuity/change debate in German foreign policy literature, only this time formulated in a slightly more complicated language.

conceptual one. Instead of attempting to close it, this gap should be seen as a reminder of the contingent and provisional nature of all conclusions reached from within the logics framework.

### **Practice, subjectivity, decisions and interactions**

The previous pages have outlined what it means to analyse foreign policy as a practice. This section develops the argument by elaborating on the relationship between practice and subjectivity, which is paramount for understanding decisions and interactions in the making of foreign policy. First of all, practices should not be thought of as mere effects of conscious will or unconscious routines of the subject. In the words of Hansen's more recent piece, "the relationship between subjects and practices is mutually constitutive: subjects perform practices, and hence (re)produce them, but it is also through practices that subjects are constituted" (Hansen 2011a: 295, similarly also Doty 1993, 1996, 1997, Diez 1999a). We 'are' someone – a football player or a diplomat – only through our performance of the already existing discursive practices of football or diplomacy. These performances are always articulatory; besides connecting practices to subject positions, they also locate both in space and time. However, they are also the site of a complex interplay between reproduction and transformation. This works both on the part of the subject positions and on the part of the practices. 'The state', or 'foreign policy professionals' thus 'exist' only insofar as they participate in the practice of foreign policy (similarly Campbell 1998: 12). At the same time, 'policy-makers' can always perform policies in different ways, which, to come full circle, always potentially result in the transformation of both the practice itself and the subject positions produced by it. Practices are always simultaneously determining the subjects and being determined by them, while subjects are always positioning themselves as well as being positioned by practices.

This discussion takes us directly to the problems of Diez and Hansen that I have identified in Chapter 2. As a reminder, I suggested that their frameworks lack a persuasive conceptualisation of how decisions with respect to the performance of the practice of foreign policy are being made from within discursive contexts and do not sufficiently account for the interaction of different policy options. While the implicit conceptualisation of practice that can be discerned from the work of both Diez and Hansen appears to be consistent with the discussion above, what the two issues have in common is their grounding in the problematic and/or insufficient theorising of subjectivity. The problem of decisions is in fact a question of the subject's relation to discourse and practice and the degree of agency it provides, while the issue of interaction confronts the subject with multiple discourses/practices. Diez and

Hansen neither adopt the Lacanian split subject, nor present their own takes in much detail. However, a close reading shows that their assumptions about subjectivity are problematic or even contradictory.

Diez basically follows the structuralist argument of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* and his subject is therefore fragmented, decentred and constituted as such only within those discourses that provide for his or her identity. The subject is an ‘intersection of different discourses’ (Diez 1999a: 50). It is a collection of a number of subject positions, but little more than that. This is incomplete as it does not explain how we assume particular subject positions, stick to them or let them go, which constitutes the dynamics of social life. Aware of the structuralist imaginary behind his concepts, Diez tries to remedy it by invoking Giddens and Wendt in his call for a ‘linguistic structurationism’ (Diez 1999b, 2014). However, this seems only an afterthought and Diez does not link this argument back to the subject, which allows him to avoid the realisation that structuralist subject positions and structurationist agents with their residual core beyond social construction are two different, hardly commensurable things (see Glynos and Howarth 2008).

Hansen is similarly ambiguous. For her, subjects are defined largely in relation to identity. And it is precisely this relation that Hansen outlines in an unclear manner: “To poststructuralism, language is ontologically significant: it is only through the construction in language that ‘things’—objects, subjects, states, living beings, and material structures—are given meaning and endowed with a particular identity.” (Hansen 2006: 18) This crucial excerpt can be read in two different ways and Hansen slides between both. First, it can be understood as that identity and subjectivity are tightly overlapping. Identity is a more general phenomenon and can be ascribed not only to subjects, but also to ‘objects’ or ‘material structures’. When related to subjects, both concepts become synonymous as there is no extra-discursive identity and subjects are constituted only within discourse. This reading is analogical to the original structuralist argument of Laclau and Mouffe and there are a number of sections that can be cited to support this interpretation (e.g. Hansen 2006: 17, 46). However, a second reading is possible, that it is through discourse that *already present* subjectivities are merely “given meaning and endowed with a particular identity”. Subjectivity is thus some pre-existing extra-discursive core, upon which discursive identities are hooked. This interpretation resembles Wendt’s (1999) structurationist constructivism and is also supported by multiple examples throughout the book (e.g. Hansen 2006: 19, 20, 24). Similarly to Diez, Hansen’s subject is also stuck between two incompatible ontologies.

Reaching for the Lacanian split subject helps resolve these dilemmas. Articulating it with the insights of Diez and Hansen, the issues of decisions and interactions can be reconceptualised



in a more consistent manner. To the first problem, how can we rethink *decisions*? As Diez puts it in a recent rejoinder, decision is in fact ‘an act of articulation’ (Diez 2014, this builds on Laclau 2000b: 84). While for Diez it is difficult to see where these articulations come from, the Lacanian approach allows us to re-enter the subject into the equation: as a split articulator, simultaneously (re)producing him- or herself as well as the discourses/practices he or she is entangled into. From a Lacanian perspective, agency and decisions arise from the eruption of the affective side of the split subject into the discursive one. We are forced to search for new identities because those provided do not make us feel comfortable and complete, which we come to realise especially through the experience of dislocation. This failure mobilises the affective force that follows the false promise of overcoming this impasse. The result is a decision, which plays itself in a particular performance of a certain practice. As it is never wholly clear how exactly a practice should be performed, we are always deciding. Thus, while we certainly cannot predict, we can still explain in retrospect: not why a decision was necessary – as it was not, but what made it possible (existence of discursive resources), why the subject was rallied behind it (affective force was aroused) and indeed, how exactly this happened (performative identification with discursive subject positions through practices).

This feeds directly into the second issue, that of *interaction*. Let me start by drawing some of the radical consequences that are implicit in Diez’s and Hansen’s frameworks. If (1) subjectivity is constituted at the intersection of discourses and (2) the political struggle/interaction is between discourses, there is no reason why different discourses could not run through the very same subjects. If practices are ambiguous and a subject can identify with multiple subject positions at the same time, there is always the potential that these may become contradictory and clash with each other. This may be very difficult to resolve in situations where there is affective attachment to contradictory positions. To paraphrase Diez (2001), it is not only ‘Europe’ and other ‘objects’ constructed within discourse, but also the very subjects that may become a ‘discursive battleground’. This is where the Lacanian subject clicks in and provides us with the means to theorise what is otherwise seen as an anomaly, a problematic or even ‘dangerous’ case (e.g. in Hansen 2006: Chapter 7). For a subject that is ontologically fragmented, engaging with contradictory discourses through the performance of incompatible practices is a common thing. Sometimes, the clash can be resolved when attachment to one discourse is much stronger than to another. Quite often, the ‘deadlock’ becomes perpetual and the question is not one of resolving, but rather of denial or

living with. Therefore, analysis of interaction should not assume consistency at the level of the subject and remain sufficiently open-minded instead.<sup>21</sup>

### **Discursive foreign policy analysis: Agenda and ‘road map’**

I have made two general arguments running through the previous two sections: First, we need a conceptualisation of foreign policy that will allow us to capture the traditional issues of external relations of national governments in a way that is compatible with discursive ontologies, utilisable in research practice and allowing for a critical intervention. Second, the Lacanian split subject is pivotal for such a project as it reinserts the elements of creativity and agency into discursive accounts, while remaining sensitive also to the structuring patterns of sedimented orders. In this section, I will translate these two arguments into a concrete ‘road map’ that condenses the discussions from the previous sections, breaks it into research questions and suggests analytical steps for answering them. To analyse interplays between regularity (social dimension) and reproduction/contestation (political dimension) of discourses and practices in particular empirical contexts, an attitude that avoids imposing prior closures is paramount. We should appreciate the complex, messy and incomplete character of ‘social reality’, which is also why I do not provide an elegant or parsimonious model for which some prominent discourse theorists in IR have called (Wæver 2002, Epstein 2011). With respect to conceptualising foreign policy, I do not have a metaphor of whether its relation to discourses and identities resembles a glacier (Diez 2001) or a human body (Hansen 2006). Nevertheless, I can still offer guidance on how to research foreign policy.

In my view, a discourse-theoretical analysis of foreign policy should be structured around the following five questions:

1. What was the foreign policy in a particular situation and why does it constitute a problem?
2. Which structural patterns made this foreign policy possible?
3. How was this foreign policy articulated, reproduced and challenged?
4. Why did certain options prevail over others?
5. What, if anything, is wrong with it?

The formulation of these questions is indeed informed by my theoretical lens, making each of them correspond with a particular stage in the process of critical explanation. However, they also capture the issues that have been of central importance for most discourse-

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<sup>21</sup> Of course, this does not mean that inconsistencies should not be taken as an important starting point for a critical engagement – provided we avoid the temptation to ‘resolve’ them once and for all.

theoretical accounts of foreign policy. Therefore, I believe that their utility exceeds the logics framework and they could be successfully and creatively articulated in a broad range of projects that share a family resemblance with this dissertation. While a complex evaluation should integrate most if not all of the questions, there is nothing proscribing a closer look at only one or two of them – and additions are welcome indeed.

To the first point, responding to what foreign policy in a particular case ‘was’ closely overlaps with the practice of problematisation. It starts with delineating the quantum of articulations for our analysis and collecting different sorts of data. As argued earlier, multiple accounts of the situation in question should be included in the process, be they practitioners’ self-interpretations or academic reflections. Confrontation of different perspectives transforms the seemingly dull and straightforward narratives of what ‘actually’ happened into a creative and political enterprise and enables us to spell out the analytical and normative dimensions of the problem. After all, the dullness of descriptions may very well be the result of a hegemonic interpretation. Therefore, responding to the first question involves putting different narratives together in order to appreciate both regularities and tensions that may destabilise the seemingly apolitical descriptions. As I will show in Chapter 6, the reconstruction of Germany’s apparent rejection to participate in the Iraq invasion gets much more interesting once we realise that the German government actively cooperated in a number of activities that supported the US military effort. What Germany’s foreign policy towards the Iraq intervention was is thus suddenly both an explanatory puzzle and a perplexing political problem.

The second question speaks to the traditional discourse-theoretical aim of uncovering the conditions of possibility and the ‘common sense’ of foreign policy. The key to this lies in repositioning the elite practice of foreign policy into its broader discursive contexts and accounting for their structuration. The question thus deals with the relations between foreign policy practices and sedimented discursive patterns. Here I directly follow Hansen’s (2006) call to see foreign policy as embedded in societal discourses. While certain sites are predictable candidates for examination (e.g. major newspapers), quite often we need to look and see where the search for intertextual references will take us. By identifying patterns in articulations across various sites, it becomes possible to situate the practices of foreign policy into the discourses that may govern them, bearing in mind that a single articulation can always speak to more than one discourse at the same time. Social logics of foreign policy can be constructed from these regularities, which I will demonstrate in the following section and in more detail in Chapter 7.

The third question speaks to the political struggle over foreign policy. The research starts from the policymakers' discourse and the key decisions under examination and looks how these decisions were written into the discursive terrain. However, the analysis does not stop with official discourses. In order to incorporate the element of discursive interaction and contestation, it is paramount to look also at rival political projects that were constructed by the opposition or in the public sphere. What is examined is the way how the meaning of a situation was constructed through the operation of the political logics of equivalence and difference (what is at stake? who are the main actors? who is against whom?) and how decisions were articulated within the signifying chains of the emerging political projects. In most situations, there will be multiple social logics and multiple political projects at play, leading to a number of intersecting relations between logics and policy articulations. Modification and mutual deformation of logics and political projects may result from these interactions, as multiple logics/projects may be articulated into a single policy. This line will be pursued in Chapter 8.

The fourth question, why certain options prevailed in these interactions, shifts our focus to the affective underpinning of discourses. Decisions, practices, discourses and subject positions prevail because they attract affective attachment by providing scenarios that promise to satisfy our desire. As argued in detail, this affective aspect can be captured by the concepts of fantasy and the fantasmatic logic, which will be the key theme of Chapter 9. The logic of fantasy is crucial also for the fifth and final question, namely what was 'wrong' (or indeed, 'right') about a particular policy. Let me reiterate that there is an important distinction between normative and ethical critique. The former relates to the content of norms, whereas the latter speaks to the ethos of subjective attachment to practices and subject positions (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 191-9). It is both possible and desirable to practice normative critique, which is to argue why a particular foreign policy should be different (speaking from a particular political perspective, of course). More important, however, is the element of ethical critique, which is all about subjects' relation to the closure brought about by fantasies. Ethical critique thus works against fantasy, relaxes its grip and affirms the ontological lack and the radical contingency of all decisions. Critique is present throughout the thesis, but most explicitly in Chapters 6 and 9.

### **Social logics of foreign policy**

The theorisation of foreign policy offered in this chapter should allow us to say something concrete about the way foreign policies are conducted in the current world. I have argued that while practices are always open-ended and indeterminate, there is also the element of

regularity and similarity, a family resemblance that enables constructing concepts like 'foreign policy'. This makes possible a more general reflection on foreign policy that would be valid across particular cases and articulable in different contexts. While such reflection stays short of a theory of foreign policy, it can bring us important insights into the way foreign policy is being practiced in the contingent and historical constellation of the current global order. These generalisations, as I have argued, are based on patterns identified in the academic literature, our general and necessarily superficial knowledge of foreign policies in different spatial and temporal contexts, as well as in the cases we have examined in detail. Such patterns can then be aggregated into social logics.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will suggest that foreign policies in the current world are governed above all by three social logics, which I will call the logics of state sovereignty, international communities and peaceful resolution. These three overlapping, intertwining, but also clashing principles are constitutive of the international political terrain in the sense that they provide the conditions of possibility that enable and limit foreign policy actions. This does not mean that they are not contaminated by the context from which I have constructed them or that they could account for all policies everywhere in the world. It is probable that, to give one example, that the logic of international communities is much more deeply embedded in the dense institutional context of Europe than anywhere else in the world. It is also perfectly possible that, for instance, international trade policies will be driven also by very different logics, e.g. of profit and/or exploitation. Therefore, I deliberately avoid outlining a priori conditions (geographic, cultural, issue-specific etc.) for the validity of my generalisations. Instead, I am offering the three logics as an open-ended and necessarily incomplete, yet still somewhat informed and backed-up hypothesis, a 'candidate for truth and falsity' (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 34) that should be tried in different contexts in order to facilitate a comparative analysis of foreign policy in the ontical context of the current world.

In the following paragraphs, I will present the three logics, focusing on the subject positions, rules and norms, as well as practices and objects that together comprise the 'grammar' that can be defined as a social logic. The general argument, which is based on academic literature and my general knowledge of a number of foreign policy cases, will be further backed up by a reading of the Charter of the United Nations as the foundational document of the post-1945 international order together with three important speeches from the recent past, which were chosen also because of their very different aims, tone and content: Tony Blair's (1999) internationalist speech outlining the 'doctrine of the international community', George W. Bush's (2002c) unilateralist address at West Point presenting the core elements of what

became known as the ‘Bush Doctrine’, and Gerhard Schröder’s (2003d) anti-war TV appearance on the first day of the Iraq War.

#### **a) Logic of state sovereignty**

When accounting for foreign policy, it is impossible to avoid the question of state sovereignty, which has also been prominent in the poststructuralist intervention in IR (Ashley 1988, Campbell 1998, Walker 1993, Weber 1994). Poststructuralists highlight the historicity of state sovereignty, as well as the constitutive role it plays in differentiating the global political space between the “locus of authentic politics within and a mere space of relations between states.” (Walker 1993: 20) As I have already suggested, these valuable insights can be reformulated in terms of a social logic. The social logic of state sovereignty constitutes the state as the privileged subject of international relations, one that is equipped with autonomy and an own interest. The logic allows also for other subject positions, be it international organisations, transnational interest groups or individual policymakers. However, these are all defined a subordinated relation to states: international organisations as aggregations furthering states’ interests, interest groups as trying to affect state conduct and policymakers as acting on states’ behalf. States are not the sole subjects, but they are unique as the locus of agency and legitimacy. The fundamental rules and norms constituted by this logic are reciprocity, mutual recognition and independence in decision-making – all of that among states. The logic is lived out through a number of ritualised practices, such as paying mutual respect to ambassadors, and materialised in objects like border fences.<sup>22</sup>

The logic is clearly present in the UN Charter. However ‘united’, the UN is still a gathering of different ‘nations’. While it is the ‘peoples’ who is called upon in the preamble, it is rather the *states* that are endowed with power and agency. The document was concluded by “our respective *Governments*, through *representatives* assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited *their* full powers” (UN 1945: Preamble, *emph. added*). The UN is “based on the principle of the *sovereign equality* of all its Members” (*ibid.*: Art. 2, *emph. added*), where ‘members’ means states. This is materialised in institutional procedures, for instance in voting, where each state counts for one vote (*ibid.*: Art. 18, 27). While the agenda of the Charter may be an internationalist one, it is clearly the states who decide. Intervening “in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction” is proscribed (*ibid.*: Art. 2), save for exceptional cases, which, again, need to be authorised by the states.

As for the speeches, state sovereignty is affirmed already in the very setting of the three events. Blair speaks to the American audience as a representative of the United Kingdom, Bush addresses American soldiers as their commander in chief and Schröder turns to the

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<sup>22</sup> Hawkins (2015) offers a very similarly defined social logic of ‘nationalism’.

German public from his office of the chancellor. All of them speak from subject positions on behalf of the states and all of them practice a mediating role between the domestic and the international. This is particularly clear in the positioning of Bush and Schröder as the privileged interpreters of international events and communicators of ‘national’ policies – both to the ‘inside’ and to the ‘outside’. It is the logic of state sovereignty that makes it possible for Schröder to announce that “*Germany* does not participate in this war” (Schröder 2003d, *emph. added*). And it is the very same logic that allows Bush to say that “*this nation* will act. [...] *We* will send diplomats where they are needed. And *we* will send you, our soldiers, where you’re needed.” (Bush 2002c, *emph. added*)

### **b) Logic of international communities**

While state sovereignty may be the most sedimented and institutionalised logic of foreign policy, it is certainly not the only one. Over the last twenty years, it is above all the logic of international communities that became prominent. This logic goes beyond the particularism of nation states and populates the international terrain with broader subjects, typically of universalist aspiration. The most encompassing subject position is that of ‘international community’, but there are also ‘partial universalities’. The ‘West’ and ‘Europe’ are the most obvious candidates, but we can also think of referents such as ‘the free world’ or ‘civilisation’. These ‘communities’ are not mere aggregations of states and their respective preferences. They are constituted by shared rules, norms or interests, typically labelled rather vaguely – think ‘humanity’, ‘liberty’, ‘progress’ or ‘dignity’ – but postulated as ‘universal’ and ‘indivisible’ nevertheless. Crucially, these very subjectivities are constituted in relation to these principles and the communities that bear them. As Bulley perceptively observes with respect to British foreign policy, “[t]o be a subject is to be a member of the ‘international community’, which gives the subject both rights and responsibilities. It is the capacity to accept and fulfil these responsibilities, which defines the subject” (Bulley 2009: 16).

The logic does not exclude the states as subjects. However, it constructs a different hierarchy of subject positions. Privilege does not come from being a state, but from participating in a community and adhering to its values, procedures and common interests. States can clearly do this, but the community itself can also become an ‘actor’. It is also possible to belong to a broader community even if one’s own government does not – this is the case of the ‘freedom-yearning’ populations living under ‘tyrants’, or of Milan Kundera’s famous argument defining the Cold War Central Europe as ‘the kidnapped West’ (Kundera 1984). Foreign policies animated by this logic would be articulated as representing the broader ‘universal’ subjects and cherishing their norms, rules and very unity – which may often include going beyond and against the immediate ‘national interest’. Its materialisation can be

seen in the very existence of international institutions, especially those operating on the principle of majority voting, in norms such as the Responsibility to Protect, or in the practices of pooling sovereignty and global governance.

Traces of the logic are identifiable already in the envisagement of ‘common ends’ in Article 1 of the UN Charter. Procedures defined in the document reach far beyond the inviolability of state sovereignty and national interest. Again, it is the voting rules that are illustrative: the majority principle is used both in the General Assembly and the Security Council, meaning that a binding resolution reflecting this ‘common will’ can be adopted and even imposed against the will of states that find themselves in the minority (save for the five veto powers, which illustrates that the logic can also have a hierarchical element and is limited by its articulation with other social logics). It is especially the role guaranteed to the Security Council that reflects the priority of ‘community’ norms and interests over those of particular states (or any other subjects). The Council is authorised to investigate “any situation which might lead to international friction” (UN 1945: Art. 34) and interfere by various means, with the explicit availability of the use of force (*ibid.*: Art. 42). Given the emphasis the logic puts on ‘community’, it is no surprise that the common will should be imposed collectively, through a ‘combined international enforcement action’ (*ibid.*: Art. 45).

Tony Blair’s speech, announcing a ‘doctrine of international community’, is clearly illustrative of the logic: “We are all internationalists now, whether we like it or not.” (Blair 1999) For Blair, both values and interests are shared. This leads him to envisage explicit limits to state sovereignty. The principle of non-interference, Blair suggests, “must be qualified in important respects” to prevent atrocities like genocides. Interestingly, the very same logic operates also in the cases of Bush and Schröder, whose opposite policies have been both criticised as unilateralist. Bush articulates an international community that is “increasingly united by common values instead of divided by conflicting ideologies. The United States, Japan and our Pacific friends, and now all of Europe share a deep commitment to human freedom embodied in strong alliances such as NATO.” (Bush 2002c) For Bush, the United States was thus acting on behalf of these values and the community they constituted. America’s task may have been self-interested, but it was also universal, one that included reshaping the international community so that it fits these values. Schröder built the argument the other way round, highlighting that his rejection of the Iraq War was shared “by a large majority of our nation, by a majority in the Security Council and a majority of all nations” (Schröder 2003d). Instead of the military solution, so Schröder, it is the ‘the path of the United Nations’ that should have prevailed. Schröder found it important to highlight that his position was a truly internationalist one, suggesting in effect that it was the United States who deviated from the international community.



### **c) Logic of peaceful resolution**

The logic of peaceful resolution is constructed around the norm of refraining from violence in international politics. It relies on the binary between the desirable normality of peace and the deviant exception of war, based on the rejection of acceptability of military conflict as the Clausewitzian continuation of politics by other means. This logic does not constitute a particular category of subject positions. What matters and privileges some of them is their relationship to 'peace'. The world thus consists of 'peace-loving' and 'war-mongering' subjects – be they states, international organisations, popular movements or leaders. Besides its proliferation in political rhetoric, this logic is also sedimented in a myriad of international practices, for instance in a broad variety of dispute settlement mechanisms. This dovetails with the arguments of Vincent Pouliot, who constructs a 'practical logic of peace' and suggests that "peace exists in and through practice when security officials' practical sense makes diplomacy the self-evident way of solving interstate disputes" (Pouliot 2010: 9, 42).

'Peace' is a major reference and a central constitutive principle of the UN Charter. Already the first line of the preamble spells out the determination "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (UN 1945: Preamble). Article 1, which outlines the purposes of the United Nations, mentions 'peace' five times in the ten lines of its opening paragraph: the UN aspires to 'maintain international peace and security', prevent and remove 'threats to the peace', suppress and settle 'breaches of the peace', all of that 'by peaceful means'. Peaceful resolution is also how states should settle their conflicts; the whole Chapter VI is dedicated to the 'peaceful settlement of disputes', providing a number of mechanisms to guarantee this. The construction of 'peace' as the normality is visible throughout the document, probably the most in Chapter VII, which deals with the exceptionalities of 'threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression'. As UN membership "is open to all [...] peace-loving states" (UN 1945: Art. 4), the Charter de facto posits peaceful conduct as a condition on the subjectivity of states which it is willing to accept.

Unsurprisingly, the logic is most apparent in Schröder's speech. By attacking Iraq, "[t]he wrong decision was taken. The logic of war prevailed over the chances of peace." (Schröder 2003d) Schröder implicitly draws a line between two categories of subjects. On the one hand, it is the "nations of the world [who] desire peace". On the other hand, it is the intervening coalition that deviates from the accepted code of conduct. Now that the war started, the most important thing is that it is over quickly and that "as soon as possible the world must again find its common future on the path of peace." (Schröder 2003d) However, the logic is clearly traceable also in the speeches of the two leaders who are associated with interventionist policies. Blair is straightforward that "[w]e should always give peace every

chance” (Blair 1999). Bush is even more interesting. His reaffirmation of the supreme value of the ‘peace of the planet’ (Bush 2002c) is no weaker than Blair’s or Schröder’s. What he offers is a grotesque rearticulation in which peace is impossible at the moment and has to be fought for. America, joined by her allies, needs “to increase the pressure for peace”, Bush argues. “We fight as we always fight, for a just peace.” (Bush 2002c) Paradoxically, Bush provides the best evidence for the argument. While his policies were anything but peaceful, he was at pains to articulate them from a ‘peace-loving’ subject position. He took great efforts to present himself as cherishing peace and explaining how his policies support it. The logic of peaceful resolution was so deeply sedimented, that even Bush could not deny or neglect it; he had to appropriate it instead.

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The discussion of the three social logics leads to two important conclusions. First, it would be difficult to find a policy or a decision that would represent and reproduce merely one of them. Instead, what we can observe are instances of a particular interplay of the three. Just like all possible shades and tones can be combined from the three primary colours, most policy articulations are also ‘coloured’ by different logics at the same time. For instance, the UN Charter simultaneously praises peace, constructs an international community with shared values and norms and allocates agency and responsibility to sovereign states. Mostly, the three logics are articulated together in what appears as a single logic of foreign policy. It is easy to occupy the subject position of a peaceful sovereign state acting on behalf of the international community during the business as usual of international politics. However, this discursive articulation can always be dislocated by the eruption of the real. In such situations, the logics may suddenly appear to clash with one another, which leads to the construction of political projects that would try to find a new articulation of social logics.

Second, each of the logics is ambiguous itself and none provides a clear course of action. There is never a straightforward reproduction of a discursive structure. As the contrast between Bush and Schröder shows, there may be more ways of reproducing ‘peace’. Indeed, all the three logics are constructed around signifiers that are extremely vague. ‘Sovereignty’, ‘international community’ or ‘peace’ mean very different things in different contexts. They are floating, if not empty signifiers, whose meaning is never arrested (Laclau 1996b). At the same time, however, they attract affective attachment that allows them to play a structuring role in the discourse. We may not agree on what ‘peace’ means, but we all want it nonetheless. This shows that logics do not work only on a conscious, cognitive or argumentative level. They operate also within the unconscious, the routinised and the affective. These two conclusions show us why social logics themselves are not enough and

why we need to articulate them also with political (discursive reconstruction) and fantasmatic (affective attachment) logics, as I will do in the second half of this dissertation.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented foreign policy as an articulatory practice and addressed some of the core topics of IR theory from a discourse-theoretical perspective inspired by the Essex School. I have argued that the practice of foreign policy is both ambiguous and open-ended, and sufficiently patterned so that we can speak about it and draw generalisations. I have suggested that the discursive ontology and critical epistemology of the logics approach allow us to conceive foreign policy in the traditional way, as external relations of the government. However, this is possible only as long as foreign policies are analysed together with their broader discursive effects and defined contextually from a particular quantum of articulations. Foreign policy constitutes certain subject positions, yet the subjects that are positioned as policy-makers are also always deciding and transforming both the practice and themselves. These decisions and transformations result from the eruptions of the real that destabilise both subjects and social orders and initiate new symbolisations that attempt to restore the balance. I have sketched the research agenda implied in these conceptual issues and suggested a ‘road map’ for doing discursive foreign policy analysis in a way that responds to the critical as well as explanatory ambitions of the logics framework.

I have engaged with the broader of the two ‘contexts’ this thesis deals with – that of foreign policy as practiced and written about. In the last section, I have generalised some of the rules and patterns of foreign policy in the current world and presented them as three distinct social logics: state sovereignty, international communities and peaceful resolution. These three logics are constitutive of international politics in the sense that they provide the conditions of possibility for foreign policy actions. However, their particular articulation varies across contexts, both in space and time. The purpose of this chapter was to provide initial reflections and tools that will facilitate the analysis of the narrower context of the Iraq crisis, which will be pursued in the latter half of this thesis. I have suggested that the arguments presented here should be seen as hypothetical. However, that does not mean that the empirical study will be conducted simply to prove or disprove them. The question is not whether the concepts and theories presented here are right or wrong, but whether they allow saying something interesting, and what modification do concepts undergo in particular contexts. Clearly, the answers cannot be provided a priori. First we need to ‘look and see’.

## 5 | Research design, data and interpretation

### Method as articulatory practice

Critical and discursive studies are typically seen as making a contribution predominantly on the theoretical and political levels. In contrast, reflections on methodologies and research designs have been rather rare. Following Hansen's (2006: xix) case for 'taking methodology back', the situation has recently been changing in international and above all security studies, witnessing the publication of at least three volumes on the relation between criticality and method (Shepherd 2013, Salter and Mutlu 2013, Aradau et al. 2015). Together with some of the more extensive IR works from the last decade that develop poststructuralist discourse-theoretical approaches (Epstein 2008, Müller 2009, Herschinger 2011), these provide a solid basis for discussing and constructing practical research strategies. From the perspective of this thesis, it is important that all of the above are also commensurable and thus easily articulable with theoretical insights and methodologies of the Essex School (above all Howarth and Torfing 2005, Glynos and Howarth 2007, Martilla 2013). This chapter borrows from all of these literatures.

How can we think of methodological issues critically? It should be clear by now that a science-mimicking approach is not an option. In a critical analysis, *method* is not "a free-standing and neutral set of rules and techniques that can be applied mechanically to all empirical objects" (Howarth 2005: 317), because these very techniques, empirical objects and the researcher's subjectivity are co-constituted and intertwined. Instead, it is useful to think of method as practice, one that takes shape not before, but through research, and one that is "performative rather than representative" (Aradau et al. 2015: 15). In other words, method does not simply extract data for a further reflection. It does something to the world. It imposes order on its messiness and complexity by selecting particular bits as somehow important, enmeshes them with concepts and knits them into building blocks for the construction of explanatory narratives. Just like foreign policy, method is also an *articulatory practice* (Howarth 2005, Glynos and Howarth 2007), as it connects ontological presuppositions, analytical concepts and data through the exercise of researcher's judgment – all of that in a way that is contingent, yet somewhat patterned, and a part of the 'to and fro' logic of the retroductive circle.

This has implications for the understanding of *methodology*, which can no longer be seen as an abstract theory of method. Since methods qua practices are to a large extent interpretive and not wholly formalisable and transferable, methodology is above all a *reflexive*

communication of the *choices* made during the research process that aspires for a maximum degree of *transparency* and *justification* (similarly Howarth 2005, Hansen 2006, Herschinger 2011, Salter and Mutlu 2013, Aradau et al. 2015). It is reflexive in the sense that it constantly turns back to the way methods are practiced, doubts and undermines the results and asks about the analytical and political effects of our research strategies. It focuses on choices, since making contingent and contextual decisions (what data to choose, how to sort them, how to analyse them) is the essence of doing research. Finally, it strives for transparency and justification of these choices as a way of achieving credibility and plausibility by providing the readers with as much information as possible for their own exercise of judgement.

Interestingly enough, this commitment to transparency and reflexivity with respect to methods and methodology has found its way only to very few empirically detailed discursive studies of international politics. While onto-epistemological assumptions are discussed at length, authors rarely let the readers look in their cards when it comes to methodological problems (the best exceptions are Hansen 2006, Müller 2009). On the one hand, this is a logical consequence of the affirmation of the contextual and interpretive nature of discourse analysis. On the other hand, leaving a gap in the narrative presentation of the path from philosophical assumptions to accounts of particular social phenomena opens a weak spot in the quest for credibility. In order to avoid this, this chapter discusses the problems associated with methods and methodology in considerable detail. It tries to establish an honest relationship with the reader as a basis for persuasion, without shying away from complementing the reflection on formalisable procedures with the explicit acknowledgement of their limits and the crucial role of experience, intuition and empathy. Salter and Mutlu (2013: 15) break down the most important methodological decisions that should be made explicit into five core aspects of a research design: “the object of analysis, the research question, the method chosen, the data that counts as true, and the way these data are interpreted.” I will use this distinction in structuring this chapter.

### **Object of analysis and research questions**

On the one hand, the ‘object’ of this thesis can be defined rather simply; it is German foreign policy in the Iraq crisis of 2002/2003. On the other hand, I spent many pages explaining the elusiveness of the research ‘object’ of foreign policy. As a discursive practice, it is permanently under construction. It is always in the process of becoming through the operation of different logics and accounting for this becoming has to be a part of the analysis. I have argued that defining foreign policy must be tightly linked with its context-specific operationalisation. Therefore, the rather general research ‘object’ of ‘German

foreign policy' has to be searched for in the particular activities of the German government related to the Iraq crisis, including debating it home and abroad, offering options to face and resolve it and deciding and implementing inspections, sanctions and military operations. For a discursive framework, this can be further conceptualised as a quantum of articulations within the discourse on 'Iraq' as manifested in a volume of data that will be clarified later in this chapter.

The initial and preliminary research question, which further specifies the aspects of the research 'object' that are of interest, is also relatively simple: what German foreign policy in the Iraq case was, how it was articulated and why certain options prevailed.<sup>23</sup> This formulation already presupposes a number of choices that overlap both with the formation of the research 'object' and with the direction the analysis will proceed. It suggests that the focus is not on picturing a single discourse and tracing its presence from different texts. Instead, the gaze is turned to the struggle of multiple discourses and logics over the practices of foreign policy. This implies that the process of discovering and forming the 'object' will consist of three steps: the selection of sites in which to search for discourses, the reconstruction of the discourses and practices that are present within these sites and the construction of logics as the basic explanatory concepts. As the latter two will be discussed later in this chapter, the focus now is on the former problem: *where* to search for data? Following Doty (1996: 14) and Hansen (2006: 54) I will refer to these sites as *discursive arenas*.

Hansen (2006: Chapter 4) addresses the problem explicitly. She argues that one should start from the *official arena*, which captures the discourses of 'privileged storytellers' (Campbell 1993) who occupy the positions from which foreign policy is performed. Hansen further suggests that a comprehensive analysis needs to acknowledge the embedding of 'privileged storytellers' within the broader society and extends her attention also to the *wider political* and *societal arenas*. The relation between the executive practices of foreign policy and parliamentary, media or cultural texts is *intertextual*.<sup>24</sup> This means that all texts already contain elements of previous texts to which they are linked in an infinite discursive web and that the play of signification easily crosses the borders of texts, genres and discursive arenas.

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<sup>23</sup> This preliminary research question is further broken down and specified through the five questions that constitute the agenda for a foreign policy analysis (Chapter 4) and through the detailed problematisation in Chapter 6.

<sup>24</sup> The notion of intertextuality has become prominent in IR above all through Hansen's appropriation of the work of Julia Kristeva, even though it has been used as early as in the title of Der Derian and Shapiro's *International/Intertextual Relations* (1989). The genealogy of the concept is even much longer, going back to Mikhail Bakhtin (Stritzel 2012). My thinking on this matter has been particularly influenced by Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: "The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network." (Foucault 1972: 23)

As long as our concept of discourse is a broad one, the principle of intertextuality can be radicalised and extended beyond language through the Derridean move of treating also practices and objects as texts (Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams 2015).

The selection of particular arenas is to a large extent determined by the research question. Starting with the official arena is reasonable for projects like mine and Hansen's, since our focus is above all on practices performed chiefly by the government. However, where to look next? To help myself with a metaphor, I believe it is useful to think of the map of intertextual linkages as of a broken window, where the cracks is what we are interested in. The pattern that emerges is one of a small hole in the middle and a web of cracks going in all possible directions. There are some sites closer to the practices of foreign policy by definition (official statements, parliamentary debates) and can be targeted a priori with a large degree of confidence. They represent the 'hole' in the middle, requiring a focused analysis of a relatively small volume of data. But there are potentially a huge number of other intertextually linked articulations in other sites: these are the cracks in the mass of the rest of the window. The amount of data to analyse grows exponentially as we move further away from the 'hole', while the likelihood of discovering new linkages decreases. However, once found, these can shed a wholly new light on the topic by highlighting previously unseen connections in the broader discourse.

This is one of the moments where there is no way of providing formalisable and transferable rules and where the contingent nature of research is most visible. It is impossible to avoid deductive pre-selection of sites and sources, since we simply cannot read everything. At the same time, I believe it is important to include as much of the inductive 'look and see' attitude as possible, which leads to reading extensive volumes of texts whose utility may prove merely contextual. For the sake of clarifying the corpus from which I will construct the research 'object' of German foreign policy, it is necessary to sketch the arenas selected for my project. The key focus is on the *official arena* as captured above all by the speeches, statements and interviews of leading decision-makers. Only a step away is the *wider political arena* that is defined as parliamentary debates and elite interviews, which directly relate, defend and challenge the official constructions. These two key sites will be further complemented by the *media arena* (one weekly and three dailies), seen as a site of interaction between the political arena and other discourses.

These choices also highlight the key limits of the project, which lie in its emphasis on elite discourses (moderated by the inclusion of tabloid press) and linguistic data (moderated by the incorporation of visual aspects). Is this not problematic, bearing in mind my own ontological arguments and the recent trends in critical IR scholarship that have shifted

attention from ‘high politics’ to marginalised discourses of the everyday and moved their focus also to practices and objects? First, I believe it would make little sense to read these critiques as suggesting that elite-centred foreign policy discourses should no longer be of interest. They make the laudable argument for extending the subject matter of international studies, but hardly for changing it completely. Since deciding, justifying and implementing international interventions are still important political problems of our time (think about Libya, Syria, Mali and so on and so forth), these issues are also relevant research questions. Second, different sorts of data are useful and available for different projects. While I have insisted on a broad conception of discourse, I could gain only very limited ‘direct’ access, e.g. to bureaucratic practices of foreign policy decision-making. Not only because of their hidden status, but also because the events of my interest happened more than a decade ago, I had to rely on their traces as left within the largely linguistic corpus of archival materials. Therefore, my decisions were not guided by problematic ontological assumptions, but by pragmatic choices related to the character of the research ‘object’.

## **Data**

The nature of data is an important aspect in the struggle for credibility and plausibility. In order to establish an honest relationship with the readers and to provide them with as much information for their exercise of judgement as possible, I chose to discuss my archive not only in this section, but also to provide additional information on data selection in the Appendix. From a discourse-theoretical perspective, data are neither a reflection of ‘reality’, nor a playfield for testing theories. As there is no other access to ‘reality’ than through our data, ‘reality’ cannot stand somewhere behind them. The ‘reality’ of which we speak is the reality of the archive, which discards the usual criterion of representativeness. Of course, this does not mean that we cannot generalise. In fact, we cannot stop doing so as the researching subject constantly crosses the boundaries of the archive in her interpretations. However, the construction of relations between the archive and the broader ‘realities’ outside it follows a very different logic, one that is much more speculative and based on the notion of family resemblances.

Selecting and collecting data is not a neutral and mechanical exercise, but a creative and constitutive process of exercising judgement. The first issue is what types of data one wants to collect, or the *synchronic dimension* of data collection. Discourse analysis treats all data as text in the broader sense; as relational complexes of signifiers intertextually linked to other texts, whose meaning is at the same time structured, ambiguous and political. As such, the focus of discourse analysis is by no means exhausted with spoken utterances or written



documents. Howarth (2005: 335) uses the criteria of linguistic/non-linguistic and reactive/non-reactive to offer a basic typology of data that can be analysed from a discursive perspective:

	Linguistic	Non-linguistic
Reactive	Interviews	Participant observation, action research
Non-reactive	Documents	Images, constructs, architectures

Source: Howarth (2005: 335)

The lion's share of my archive falls in the linguistic/non-reactive square as I have mostly analysed political speeches, transcripts of parliamentary debates, newspaper articles and memoirs. However, I have also ventured to the two bordering squares by conducting elite interviews (linguistic/reactive) and including a visual element to my analysis of newspapers (non-linguistic/non-reactive).

The second question is that of temporal delineation, which I will refer to as the *diachronic dimension*. In simple terms, where should one locate the temporal beginning and the end of the archive on the 'Iraq crisis'? This is necessarily a matter of decision, since beginnings and ends of wars are never clear-cut (see Zehfuss 2007). As I will show in Chapter 6, Iraq was an issue on the international agenda during most of the 1990s. However, it was not until George W. Bush's construction of the 'axis of evil' in the State of the Union Address on 29 January 2002 that Iraq became a major topic in the German public debate, which is why I have used it as a starting point. Establishing the endpoint is even more problematic. At the time of writing in 2015, Iraq is still in the middle of a conflict that can be traced back to the intervention of 2003. In this sense, the crisis has not ended. However, since I am interested more in the practices of negotiating and deciding military intervention than in warfare, occupation or state-building, my endpoint is the start of military operations on 20 March 2003.

However, I am using also a complementary archive, one that consists of politicians' reflections on the crisis as captured in memoirs and my interviews. Clearly, the timeframe is much broader here, ranging from the publication of Gerhard Schröder's autobiography in 2007 to the interviews collected in November and December 2014. Thus, their temporal coherence is only very basic, defined by the fact that they were constructed post bellum. These narratives also have a very different direction in time. Unlike in the debates and representations from the time of the crisis, memoirs and interviews are chiefly oriented towards the past. They are carefully crafted reflections on what had happened, utilising the

benefit of hindsight and, indeed, imposing closure on what was necessarily messy and ambiguous. This means that they cannot be simply mixed with the other data, but rather treated in a different way, which I will comment on later in this chapter. Combining the synchronic and diachronic dimensions results in a map of the archive as visualised in the following table.

<b>SYNCHRONIC DIACHRONIC</b>	<b>LINGUISTIC NON-REACTIVE</b>	<b>LINGUISTIC REACTIVE</b>	<b>NON-LINGUISTIC NON-REACTIVE</b>
<b>IRAQ</b> (29.1.2002-20.3.2003)	<i>Official speeches, statements, interviews Parliamentary debates Newspaper articles (FAZ, SZ, BILD, Der Spiegel)</i>	N/A	<i>Visual aspects of newspapers (covers, caricatures, photographs)</i>
<b>REMEMBERING IRAQ</b> (2006-2014)	<i>Memoirs</i>	<i>Elite interviews</i>	N/A

Constructing the archive for the executive and wider political arenas, which consists above all of speeches and transcripts of parliamentary debates, is not difficult. These materials are freely available through official websites and government publications. Similarly convenient was also the process of narrowing, as the volume of data is not that extensive so that it could not be read through in detail and sorted mostly through a ‘look and see’ approach (see Appendix). Elite interviews were conducted in order to complement the publicly available data with an original archive constructed with the particular research question in mind. I managed to speak to 10 current and former foreign policy oriented MPs with a foreign across all parliamentary fractions. The interviews were conducted in November and December 2014 in Berlin, led in German, lasted typically around 30 minutes and all of them were recorded. Following my agreement with the respondents, I am not citing any names, only party affiliations. The final items for the political arenas are memoirs. Four of the most important foreign policy decision-makers have already published their accounts and were thus included in the sample: the chancellor Gerhard Schröder (2007), the foreign minister

Joschka Fischer (2011), the defence minister Peter Struck (2010) and the state secretary (deputy minister) in the Foreign Office Ludger Volmer (2013).

As for the media arena, deductive narrowing and preselection was crucial as the amount of potential data is exponentially higher. I chose four outlets: *BILD*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* and *Der Spiegel*. I decided on the basis of circulation, recognition and different political leanings.<sup>25</sup> This allowed capturing a reasonably broad spectrum of discourses within the published opinion, which would be largely attended to by the political elite, while also having an outreach to the broader public. With respect to the three dailies, these are the ones with the highest circulation in Germany. More importantly, they are broadly acknowledged as opinion-making. *BILD* is the leading tabloid and the main source of politainment in the country, comparable to the aggregation of the News Corp. outlets in the UK, none the least because of its generally right-wing orientation. *SZ* and *FAZ* are viewed as the most important broadsheets and major points of reference. The Munich-based *SZ* is liberal-left leaning, while the Frankfurt-based *FAZ* is liberal-conservative. *Der Spiegel* is the best-selling and most acknowledged news-focused weekly in the Federal Republic. It is known for investigative reporting, as well as for being critical of the establishment regardless of its political colour (although I would see it as liberal-left leaning).

### **Method and interpretation**

The method of this thesis is discourse analysis. However, this is only the starting point, since ‘doing discourse analysis’ can mean different things. While I will discuss my approach in detail in the next section, let me first briefly situate it with respect to two broad dilemmas and highlight the choices I have made. First, my discourse analysis is closer to the ‘macro’ end of the scale. Rather than providing a closely focused examination of a few texts, I went through extensive volumes of different sorts of material. This implies a trade-off, in which certain flattening of fine details is offset by the capturing of a broader set of discourses and a higher degree of knowledge with respect to their spread across different arenas. I am less interested in deciphering particular linguistic tropes and figures and more interested in the patterns of discursive structuring, reproduction and contestation. Second, my approach is one of interpretive reading as adopted from ethnography and literary studies and devoid of ‘objectivist’ and quantitative techniques such as software analysis. The latter are not

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<sup>25</sup> Qualitative factors such as recognition or influence are indeed soft and fuzzy. One of the criteria that could be used is what journalists themselves consider important. A study from 2006 (Weischenberg, Malik, and Scholl 2006) lists *SZ* (35 % regular users), *Der Spiegel* (34 %) and *FAZ* (15 %) as the three media most regularly used by other journalists, with *BILD* (11 %) ending up fifth.

necessarily incommensurable with a poststructuralist approach and can indeed bring interesting insights (e.g. Herschinger 2011, Nabers 2015). Arguably, it is not even possible to bracket the ‘objectivist’ and quantitative elements completely, e.g. in database search tracking the frequency of particular words. With all this in mind, the discourse analysis conducted in this thesis is very much an interpretive one, with limited reliance on quantitative data selection and no use of software analysis.

By this point, I have discussed all the components that need to be in place for the most important part: the analysis itself. I have defined my research question and the method to be used. I have collected different types of data and sorted them into three discursive arenas – the official/executive, the wider political and the media arena. The distinction between the three is merely heuristic and provisional, since intertextual links respect no artificial boundaries. However, it helps to slice the archive into smaller pieces, which are analysed separately in the first step, only to be searched for connections between them in the second step. The analysis proceeds from the executive arena and moves gradually through the other two within which official practices are embedded. The movement from the ‘centre’ defines the logic of the research, but by no means the logic of power. I focus on the policymakers not as ‘power-holders’, but as subjects that are positioned in the sedimented social constellations as performers of foreign policy practices. In the remainder of the chapter, I will first discuss the construction of logics in the process of dual reading. After that, I will reflect on the specifics of analysing the two sources of data that fall out of the linguistic/non-reactive square: interviews and images.

#### **a) Dual reading and construction of logics**

The particular construction of my research object and the commitment to the ‘look and see’ attitude in empirical research imply an approach based on a detailed reading of a significant volume of texts. There are two different ways of reading, which I will refer to as broad and narrow, partially coinciding with different phases of research. The first, broad and open-minded reading can be described as going through large amounts of material, taking notes and trying to make some initial sense of what is going on. This leads to the formation of basic, often intuitive and sketchy observations with respect to who is involved, which events are described and how, what positions are taken and how they are justified. Provisional hypotheses regarding patterns, rules and even logics start emerging. The purpose of the broad reading is threefold: to gain a preliminary understanding of the case from the perspective of those involved, to carve out thick description of the practices in question and to select texts for the second reading. As for the latter, the selection process relies very much on judgement and is thus difficult to formalise. In general, I found important the texts which

offered explicit articulations related to German foreign policy. I looked for repetition as a sign of attempts to fix the discourse, as well as for contestations. Additionally, certain texts were considered more important because of their staging or genre, e.g. key policy statements in the parliament or opinion pieces in leading newspapers.

The second, closer and partially formalised reading focuses on the notes taken and the texts selected during the first phase. It moves from understanding towards explanation as it strives to unpack discursive rules and structuring principles with the help of analytical concepts not used by the participants themselves. This can be further broken into two steps: isolation of articulations and reconstruction of their structure. The archive is first narrowed down to statements that appear to reflect the main tendencies within the discourse, both explicit (i.e. direct quotes) and implicit (e.g. it makes sense to isolate the statement that ‘Schröder is courageous and principled’ even though the chancellor would not put it in these words in his own speech). Each statement is understood as an instance of articulation; that is as constructing contingent relations between elements of discourse (signifiers, practices, objects). These can take different forms, but most often they are predicative (‘Germany is sovereign’, ‘policy is principled’) or relational (‘Germany, France and Russia agree’, ‘Saddam Hussein defies the will of the international community’). Since every single statement is an act of articulation, the obvious question is how to choose those somehow important with respect to the research question. Such a process is, once again, very much based on judgement and the researcher’s understanding acquired through the first reading. Just like when selecting texts, I focused on repetitions and contestations.

Once articulations are isolated, we can move to the reconstruction of the structure which they constitute and reproduce – and which organises and makes them possible in turn. For this purpose, I appropriate two basic concepts from the poststructuralist tradition: subject positions and nodal points. Together they provide the foci around which discourses can be condensed, serving as building blocks for the construction of logics. I start from detecting *subject positions* by asking the crucial ‘who’ questions – ‘who speaks?’, but also ‘who is spoken?’ in and through a particular discourse. This allows identifying the main characters in the play under observation (the ‘actors’) and hints at their relational positioning. As subjects are constituted as such only within discourse, it is important not to assume too much at this stage and remain as open-minded as possible. While it is often the case that, exactly as one would expect, nation-states are spoken into existence as the privileged subjects of foreign policy, other complementing or conflicting subject positions can also appear in the discourse (e.g. ‘the West’, ‘the government’, ‘the opposition’), very often including the ambiguous ‘we-subject’ (Weldes 1999).

*Nodal points* condense discourse according to the ‘what’ questions, especially ‘what is being spoken?’ and ‘what is at stake?’ They are ‘privileged discursive points’ (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 112) or ‘central concepts in the political debate’ (Diez 2001: 16) which stabilise the flow of meaning by functioning as temporary centres of a discourse. Most signifiers in a discourse are linked to nodal points, which define their meaning. In order to achieve this temporal fixation, nodal points need to be flexible enough to withhold a scale of interpretations. They are supreme examples of ‘essentially contested concepts’ (Gallie 1956), or, to use Laclau’s terms, floating and/or empty signifiers.<sup>26</sup> Due to this constitutive ambiguity, nodal points are also where rival discourses intersect and compete for hegemony through imposing particular meaning on these concepts by articulating them in different signifying chains. Even though Laclau (2005) uses even the example of the very person of Juan Perón as a nodal point of the Argentine populist discourse, these have been typically operationalised rather as particular words or catchphrases, e.g. ‘Europe’ (Diez 1999a, 2001) or ‘climate protection’ (Methmann 2010a). My understanding is more relaxed and I analyse as nodal points not only explicit phrases, but also more broadly defined themes and points of contention that play a structuring role in the discourse.

The third move consists of bringing the two readings together with the aim of carving out social, political and fantasmatic logics. This is a process of juxtaposing and confronting insights from the two readings. It aims at resituating the formally constructed subject positions and nodal points from the narrow reading within the general discursive contexts and practices as described during the broad reading. It is a creative articulation of different elements that involves moving beyond the explicit level of the text. However, this is not a slide to an ontologically problematic speculation about ‘realities’ located somewhere behind discourse. Rather than that, it is an attempt to resituate the text within the broader set of practices, relations, institutions and affects within which it is produced and which it reproduces in turn. As argued earlier, all of these phenomena are discursive themselves, or, in the case of affect, intimately interwoven with discourse. They either leave their mark on the text, or can be inferred from our contextual knowledge gained in the first reading. I will now demonstrate these arguments in a discussion of how the operation of logics is inferred.

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<sup>26</sup> Laclau distinguishes between floating and empty signifiers. Floating signifiers are ambiguous and contested due to their simultaneous articulation in rival signifying chains and their meaning can in principle be ‘resolved’ if one particular articulation becomes hegemonic. In contrast, empty signifiers are defined rather by their function of holding a certain discursive formation together by signifying its (impossible) totality – just like the identity of ‘people’ in a populist discourse. In practice, however, Laclau admits that the two categories usually overlap (Laclau 2005: 129-138; also Laclau 1996: 36-46). I am downplaying the difference in my looser and pragmatic use of the concept of a nodal point, since for me it is above all a methodological device for reading discourse. My nodal points therefore refer to both floating and empty signifiers and there can be a number of nodal points simultaneously in the same discourse (for the latter see also Marttila 2013).

The following ‘abstract’ points are then further developed within the empirical context of the chapters on each of the logics.

*Social logics* represent the sedimented, routinised and habitual aspects of discourses and practices and allow us to describe hegemony as a state of affairs. Focusing on relatively stable patterns, they allow us to represent the ‘regularities of dispersion’ (Foucault 1972), or, in more traditional terminology, social structures. On the explicit level, they can be inferred from the constellation of subject positions. Identification of ‘actors’ and their positioning vis-à-vis each other (e.g. ‘foreign minister’ as acting on behalf of ‘Germany’, which is in turn part of ‘the international community’) provides the basic analytical grid and describes the dispersion. The next step is to look at its rules: how is it that a foreign minister can speak on behalf of a country? How is it that a country is being influenced or limited by the international community? These rules can be found in the form of explicit narratives, but also in other (predominantly linguistic) texts of which we have to be aware – for example in national and international legal documents. Crucially, the identification of social logics requires a rather large interpretive step towards the implicit and the contextual as they have to be sedimented and materialised in a number of ritualised practices and institutions: hierarchical structures of the government, parliamentary habits and traditions, mechanisms of inter-governmental consultation and cooperation, architecture of the international system. It is thus paramount to articulate insights from our background knowledge of political processes in a particular country. The best way of identifying social logics is often by trying to step in the shoes of the practitioners, carefully reading their speeches and listening to them in the interviews in order to see what in the world they take for granted.

The operation of *political logics* can be seen in the reconstruction of the discursive space that follows from dislocations, a process whereby subject positions are renegotiated and borders redrawn. This happens above all on the level of language, so the construction of political logics is much more formalisable than with social and fantasmatic logics. The inquiry starts from subject positions and nodal points and looks at the relations that are being drawn between them in the public debate. I ask how the meaning of nodal points (e.g. ‘responsibility’) is defined through forging relations to other concepts (e.g. ‘loyalty’), or how subject positions are specified and/or reconstructed by being inserted into signifying chains with other subject positions (e.g. ‘Germany and the USA believe’) or predicates (e.g. ‘self-confident’). While the level of language is crucial, these relations are reproduced also in practices (e.g. joint declarations as constructing equivalence in a common position). Importantly, political logics can forge relations also between social logics and particular practices by constructing the latter as the ‘correct’ or ‘wrong’ application of otherwise undisputed principles.

*The logic of fantasy* captures the extent of subjective attachment to fantasies. There are two analytical moves, namely searching for the narrative structure of a fantasy and asking for the extent to which subjects are attached to it. This is the most interpretive step, in which the major role is played by the hardly articulable elements of background knowledge, cultural immersion and empathy. In this case, understanding requires also ‘feeling with’. Nevertheless, I was able to formulate some rules of a thumb. In identifying fantasies, I looked for the following five tropes: (1) the structure of an ideal and an obstacle to it (e.g. the regime in Iraq as an obstacle to the ideal of a democratised Middle East), (2) transgressive hints, often uttered ‘between the lines’ (e.g. hints at Bush’s religious fundamentalism in a discourse that otherwise brings very different arguments), (3) the notions of excessive enjoyment/theft of enjoyment (e.g. Saddam’s luxurious lifestyle compared to the situation of the population), (4) contradictions (e.g. Bush as simultaneously a religious fanatic and a cold-blooded power politician) and (5) particularly detailed and picturesque beatific/horrific descriptions (e.g. going into much detail in listing the crimes or perversions of Saddam Hussein). Just like nodal points and subject positions, these traits provide building blocks from which fantasmatic structures are reassembled.

The assessment of subjective attachment concentrates on the function of fantasy, which lies in providing a foundational guarantee by covering over the lack and imposing discursive closure on the ambiguous nature of ‘social reality’. I found five partially overlapping themes pointing to a high degree of subjective attachment: (1) the notion of ‘no alternative’ (e.g. with references to the religious or moral concepts of ‘good’ or ‘the right thing to do’), (2) a sense of urgency (e.g. we need to act now before Saddam acquires WMD), (3) the very core of identity appears to be under threat (e.g. not joining the intervention as unlearning Germany’s liberal democratic vocation), (4) repetitiveness and insistence on something regardless of the ‘facts’ (e.g. Germany is isolated in her position, even though there are other countries with a similar line), and (5) self-reported emotional responses.

## **b) Interviews**

While the process of reading and construction of logics as outlined applies also for interpreting interviews, there are specific issues that deserve to be discussed, especially with respect to the role of the researcher. Interviews need to be approached as complex social events (Blakeley 2013: 168) or dialogical encounters (Howarth 2005: 338-339) during which not only knowledge is (re)produced, but also the interviewer’s and the interviewee’s subjectivities. From the perspective of objectivist social science, the presence of subjects brings all sorts of biases that need to be filtered away. From an ethnographic perspective, which this thesis adopts, such ‘biases’ are inseparable, since they are implicated already in



the very production of our data. More importantly, traces of subjectivity should not be seen as problems but rather as opportunities to gain insights into social life (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 110). Bearing this in mind and to avoid flattening the material, I did not make full transcripts, but rather listened to the records repeatedly, took notes and compared these with my field notes from immediately after the interviews. The process of interpretation was thus lengthy and gradual. For heuristic purposes, the core issues encountered can be grouped around the epistemological modes of understanding and explaining.

Understanding is the primary mode of interviewing, as what we are aiming at is above all “to catch the interviewee’s meanings, to perceive the framework within which he is talking” (Dexter 1970: 19), which is then formalised in social logics. First, it is important to give the interviewees enough space to express themselves in detail and on their own terms. Equally important is the ability to listen to what the interviewee has to say, which means above all trying to understand the interviewee’s narrative in its own logic and without imposing one’s concepts and expectations too early (Dexter 1970: 61, Howarth 2005: 339). Empathy and the ability to ‘feel with’ are absolutely indispensable (Dexter 1970, Kaufmann 2010). Therefore, I chose an open-ended, semi-structured and non-standardised approach, with each interview tailored specifically for the particular person. I encouraged the respondents to share anything they find important, regardless of my questions. I started from broad questions (such as “How do you evaluate Germany’s position in the Iraq crisis?”), which were designed to open space for the interviewees’ own narration. These were followed by more particular queries, asking for clarifications or pointing to contested aspects of the broad answers that were provided. In a third step, I confronted the respondents with counter-narratives and/or their own public statements. While provoking discussion, I always tried to position myself as appreciating the arguments.

Another set of issues arises in the researcher’s relation towards the recorded narratives. In particular, how should we deal with apparently rehearsed or contradictory arguments? How should we reflect on hidden narratives, or the part of the story that is not being told? (Howarth 2005) In part, these problems can be negotiated through triangulation with other sorts of data. Indeed, it is usually only after contextualising individual interviews that it is possible to see that something is rehearsed or incomplete. More importantly, as long as we do not expect to unveil some sort of objective ‘truth’ behind the text, what would otherwise be seen as problematic actually serves to our benefit. Rehearsed stories and repetitions of the same catchphrases are of interest as they point to an ‘undigested’ reproduction of social norms or dominant discourses (Kaufmann 2010: 111-112). They can also highlight attachments to particular signifiers or reliance on carefully crafted narratives that strive to

cover up their problematic basis and inherent inconsistency. Discrepancies, contradictions and silences are true gems for the researcher, because they scrape the smooth discursive surface and allow us to identify the underlying dynamics and conflicts (Howarth 2005: 338-339, Kaufmann 2010: 113-117).

In the move towards explanation during the second 'reading', two additional challenges arise: the subject positions of the researcher and the respondent and the question of temporality. To the former, in reflecting on one's own subject positions, the researcher literally has to analyse his or her own voice in the record as belonging to a different person: what positions was I speaking from and what were their logics and limits? Most of the time, I was trying to situate myself as a junior scholar asking for a favour, which enabled me to establish rapport and gather information. Nevertheless, I found it very difficult to switch to the more assertive subject position of a critical inquirer. Naturally, this manifests itself in the data, as the narration is rather smooth and without strong emotions on either side. It also means that the interviews are better at capturing the comfort zone of respondents' own meanings than their struggles to make sense of inconsistencies and contradictions. Therefore, they are more useful for identifying the patterns of social logics than for accounting for their contingent articulations, which is a limit that can be rather easily offset by reading speeches and debates. Analogically, the interviewees also occupied different subject positions and kept sliding between them. The most common shift, particularly apparent with retired politicians, was that from an active participant (which is my key interest and I pay particular attention to it) towards a distanced observer who increasingly relied on secondary sources (which is of merely contextual interest).

The second issue in the move towards explanation is the problem of temporality (which is valid also for memoirs): how does the distance of nearly twelve years impact on narratives and what can be done with it? Influence of current discourses is one aspect. In Germany, the intervention in Iraq is now broadly seen as disastrous; a CDU-affiliated expert whom I interviewed went as far as to joke that he was one of the only three people in the country who would still advocate it. Interestingly enough, though, none of my interviewees admitted that they would see their position at the time of the crisis as mistaken. This hints that the retrospective influence of current discourses may not be as high as that of the rehearsed narratives from the time of the events. However, it is also possible that those who did change their mind simply were not prepared to talk to me. Another side of the temporality issue is the status of interviews vis-à-vis the historical archive. Interviews produce a 'discourse on discourse' and their value thus comes primarily from juxtaposing the two, which makes them useful for some but not all parts of a critical explanation. I have relied on interviews in constructing my problematisation (Chapter 6), since detailed engagement with politicians

enables seeing the key arguments and disagreements in the debate. I have also used them when assessing the durability of social logics (Chapter 7). However, their utility for analysing discursive contestation (political and fantasmatic logics) is limited, as this must be assessed primarily from materials from the time of the events.

### **c) Images**

The general methodological rules of the logics approach can be applied also to visual aspects. However, it is also clear that a picture is somehow different from the linguistic material that constitutes the bulk of this thesis and that these differences need to be discussed. Scholars in international studies have shown growing interest in the visual, including some attempts to elaborate on theoretical and methodological implications of such a move (most explicitly Hansen 2011b, Heck and Schlag 2013, Bleiker 2015). Most of these works approach the issue from a poststructuralist angle, which makes them relatively easily articulable with my own approach. Since images do not play a central role in this dissertation, I do not claim a significant contribution to debates around visibility, but rather borrow insights from these literatures and articulate them to be able to say something more than purely textual research allows. I will argue that images help us get closer to issues related to affect and the real and therefore, they are particularly useful for analysing fantasies. While nothing prevents the use of images in other stages of critical explanation, they would not significantly amplify or alter the arguments regarding problematisation, social and political logics as based on linguistic data in this particular project. Therefore, they will be used only in the account of the logic of fantasy (Chapter 9).

It is apparent that images – paintings, caricatures, photographs – communicate in a different way than texts; that they seem to ‘say’ something else and something more than words. However, this implies neither the naïve assumption that pictures, especially photographs, show us the ‘real thing’ and offer immediate access to the signified, nor the conclusion that images ‘speak’ for themselves. Every image is a cultural product, whose meaning is dependent on relational articulation within a broader discursive web. “[T]he power of images cannot be said to result from qualities internal to the picture” (Campbell 2004: 61).<sup>27</sup> Images do not require a separate ontology, since they are as discursive as words, practices or objects. Therefore, it is important to always analyse visuals in their relational articulation – with other images, texts, as well as broader contexts that render them meaningful (Campbell 2004: 61-62, Hansen 2011b: 53, O’Loughlin 2011: 83-84, Bleiker 2015: 873). Empirically speaking, images never exist in isolation, in particular when it comes to media outlets. They are accompanied with captions, situated on a page and may even include texts in themselves

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<sup>27</sup> An alternative view is presented by Heck and Schlag, who argue that images “do have a power of their own” (2013: 895).

(bubbles in a caricature, a banner on a photograph from a demonstration etc.). Therefore, there is no strict boundary between different forms of signification, since “all media are mixed media” (Mitchell 1994: 5).

While the ontological status of images and texts is equally discursive, there is still a difference between the two, one that lies rather in degree than in quality. First, images are “more ambiguous than words” (Hansen 2011b: 58). They produce certain ‘excess’ or ‘surplus’ of meaning that cannot be brought into language (Möller 2007: 180, Bleiker 2015: 873). Second, they have the capacity to provoke stronger emotional responses than linguistic texts (Hansen 2011b: 55, Bleiker 2015: 876). Therefore, there is a certain surplus of affect at play as well. The notion of surplus/excess is familiar from Chapter 3 and it enables situating the image into ontological categories of the Essex School: images are always at the boundary between a particular discourse and the broader discursive field (where the excess of meaning is located), as well as at the boundary between the discursive and the real (the location of the surplus of affect). The image is thus simultaneously a site of a discursive articulation and a reservoir of something that exceeds and potentially subverts it. Roland Barthes is already thinking along these lines in his pioneering essay *Camera Lucida* (1993 [1980]). Explicitly drawing on Lacan, Barthes distinguishes between *studium*, the discursive dimension of knowing, culture and context, and *punctum*, the contingency that disrupts and provokes emotional responses (the real).

Proceeding to methodological issues, it has to be clearly stated that the image does not have the structure of the sign (Barthes 1993). Language is also slippery, but its formal structure makes it still rather unproblematic to at least separate words from one another as different signifiers, which is not the case with an image. In pictures, the isolation of a signifier, which is the necessary condition for writing about the visual, “requires a secondary action of knowledge or of reflection” (Barthes 1993: 5). Therefore, it is possible to conceptualise images as chains of signifiers, which, just like linguistic statements, are articulations of different elements. Images can be redescribed in the process of interpretive coding, which ‘identifies’ signifiers and the relations between them. However, one still needs to be aware that these signifiers are always ‘read into’ the visual by the researching subject. This ‘method’ largely resembles a free play of associations, as I repeatedly browsed through pictures and wrote down who and what I saw in them, resulting in codes like ‘Saddam’, ‘weapons’, ‘soldiers’ and so on (see Appendix). Certain signifiers are relatively straightforward to read: faces of politicians, flags or writings. Others, like facial expressions or landscapes, are more ambiguous and require a larger interpretive leap and more sensitivity on the part of the researcher. The relatively formal method of coding was complemented by a narrative interpretation, in which I noted what I thought the image was supposed to signify.

In a second step, nodal points and key subject positions can be established from patterns in these codes and descriptions.

Since the play of signification exceeds the boundaries of a particular image, the analysis has to look at the images as already embedded in particular contexts. First, there is ‘the immediate intertext’ (Hansen 2011b: 53) of a newspaper page. This ‘proximate context’ can be formalised and included in the coding. Titles, captions and texts bring additional signifiers to the chain of the picture, resulting in an articulation that alters the meaning of the different elements: “The text doesn’t ‘gloss’ the images, which do not ‘illustrate’ the text. [...] Text and image, interlacing, seek to ensure the circulation of [...] signifiers” (Barthes 1982 [1970]). My coding thus did not focus only the image per se, but rather on the ‘imagetext’ (Mitchell 1994) of the page, deciding in each particular instance which aspects of the page were intertextually related to the image and which were not. Second, images are embedded in “the wider policy discourse” (Hansen 2011b: 53). The emphasis of this dissertation is precisely on the ‘macro’ issues of this ‘distant context’, that is on the way how images relate to the broader discursive patterns of fantasies. My emphasis is thus very much on this socio-political contextualisation of images. This also must have necessarily, if not always consciously, affected my coding, since I approached the images with hypotheses already formed during textual analysis.

## **Conclusion**

Method and methodology present the second pillar of the bridge from the ontological and epistemological to the empirical, the first pillar being the previous chapter on foreign policy. It is worth noting once again that while the language I have used is deliberately conventional, as the use of terms like ‘data’ and ‘research design’ demonstrates, methodology is not treated as an objective, neutral and detached system of rules and techniques. Instead, I have argued for a conception that affirms that research involves contingent choices and decisions and therefore, it is always done from a perspective. Just like foreign policy, method is also an articulatory practice that acts upon the social world, positions subjects within it and connects disparate elements – researcher’s gaze, concepts, data – into a signifying chain through which they all undergo a certain modification. In contrast to foreign policy, method is a practice that is performed by us as researchers. This chapter was therefore predominantly inward-looking, reflecting on the ways how ‘doing discourse analysis’ looks like, which data can be incorporated and how are they entangled into explanatory narratives. The key purpose was to communicate the choices I have made

and thereby establish an honest and transparent relationship with the reader, which is a crucial precondition for persuasion.

Methodological discussion also closes the first half of the thesis, which dealt with the issues and arguments arising within discourse theory and International Relations, and, especially, from the articulation of these two fields. The second half will utilise these insights in a detailed examination of Germany's perplexing foreign policies in the Iraq crisis. Chapter 6 will construct the explanandum by engaging with a number of narratives about Germany's foreign policy, presenting a timeline of the Iraq crisis and, finally, carving out what about it constitutes a problem worthy of our attention. The following three chapters are then best thought of as distinct discourse-analytical steps, each of them approaching the archive from a slightly different angle. The identification of social logics in Chapter 7 captures the patterning on the level of 'consensus reality', which makes it similar to hermeneutical, constructivist and practice turn perspectives. Chapter 8 turns to the construction of meaning in the process of discursive contestation in a way that is familiar from discursive poststructuralism. Finally, Chapter 9 discusses the issues of affect, fantasy and attachment, thereby incorporating the psychoanalytical impulse most explicitly. A contingent and necessarily incomplete response to the problems raised in Chapter 6 then slowly emerges from the *articulation* of these three distinct yet overlapping dimensions of discourse analysis.

## 6 | Problematisation

### Inconsistent policies, emotional debates

Opening the empirically oriented part of the thesis, this chapter will trace Germany's foreign policies in the Iraq crisis to show that they were by no means self-evident or unequivocal. On the contrary, Germany's response to the US-led construction of Iraq as a top security issue was rich on tensions and contradictions, often running all the way down to the level of individual policy-makers. Describing these inconsistencies and contrasting them with a variety of smooth narratives is a creative and critical exercise, which constructs the 'explanandum' of this thesis and addresses the first question on the foreign policy agenda from Chapter 4: What was Germany's foreign policy in the Iraq crisis and why does it constitute a problem? Such description cannot aim at giving a neutral or objective historical account, since it is unavoidably written from a perspective. Description is always already interpretation, as it necessarily involves making choices, e.g. regarding which events or arguments are included and which are omitted. While the following pages capture a broad range of aspects of the case and examine different perspectives as provided by both practitioners and commentators, objectivity or exhaustiveness are not what is at stake. Instead, the purpose is to *problematise* Germany's foreign policy, that is to show what about it constitutes the analytical puzzle and political problem calling for our intervention (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 116).

The first three sections provide a chronology of the build-up to the Iraq war of 2003. The narrative is based on secondary literature and journalistic timelines of the crisis, complemented by a substantial engagement with primary sources like documents, memoirs and interviews. The main purpose of this description is to point to the myriad of practices that constituted German foreign policy in the Iraq crisis, since the latter was by no means a matter of a single 'yes-or-no' choice. What makes the description also a 'thick' one is the inclusion and contextualisation of interpretations provided by the practitioners themselves. What makes it critical is that it is written in a way that emphasises rather than covers the tensions and inconsistencies, which gradually emerge as the research puzzle to be addressed, highlighting rather than obscuring the messy and political nature of 'social reality'. The task of the fourth section is then to revisit these moments on more formal terms and distil the problematisation that will be unpacked in the three chapters that follow.

### **1991-2001: Germany, America and Iraq before the 'axis of evil'**

The regime of Saddam Hussein and the US hostility towards it figured on the German agenda for more than a decade before the US launched their attack in March 2003. The freshly reunited Federal Republic was asked to participate already in the 1991 Gulf War, in which the international coalition led by the George H.W. Bush administration pushed Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. The Kohl government refused direct military involvement, yet supported the war by contributing 18 billion German marks ('cheque book diplomacy') and by sending troops and fighter jets for the defence of Turkey from a possible Iraqi retaliation (Baumann and Hellmann 2001: 70). The war left Saddam Hussein in power, albeit with a number of limitations, especially with respect to Iraqi WMD programmes, which were supposed to be dismantled.

The following ten years were characterised by UN sanctions and arms inspection regimes, Iraq's oscillation between reluctant cooperation and denial thereof, as well as American and British military measures (enforcement of 'no-fly zones' and other air raids). Generally speaking, Berlin was supportive of the diplomatic and multilateral aspects and sceptical to the unilateral and military parts. 1998 marked an important shift, since hardliners were increasingly getting an upper hand in Washington. In January, the influential neoconservative think-tank Project for the New American Century initiated an open letter (1998) calling for a regime change policy vis-à-vis Iraq, which was signed by leading intellectuals such as Robert Kagan and Francis Fukuyama, but also former practitioners like Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz or Richard Armitage. In October, the Republican-dominated Congress passed the Iraqi Liberation Act, which was also swiftly approved by President Clinton, making regime change the official policy. In December, the US and Britain conducted bombing raids on Iraq. Amidst growing tensions and obstructions, the remaining UN inspectors left the country.

Changes were underway also in Germany. In September 1998, the Social Democrats returned to government after fifteen years in opposition. Led by the centrist Gerhard Schröder, the SPD won by a landslide and formed a first-ever national coalition with the Green Party. While Schröder entered the chancellery, the job of the vice-chancellor and foreign minister was taken by Joschka Fischer. A former radical, Fischer turned into a leader of the pragmatist wing of the Green Party and played a significant role in shifting its foreign policies away from pacifism and anti-Americanism and closer to the mainstream. The red-green government came to power on a platform for a civilian foreign policy, which was supposed to be based on soft power, conflict prevention, development assistance and proactive diplomacy. Ironically, one of its first decisions authorised the participation of



Germany's forces in military operations during the Kosovo crisis. With respect to Iraq, Berlin did not object against the 1998 air raids (Baumann and Hellmann 2001: 67), but the new government was strongly sceptical to the idea of regime change. As Fischer (2011) notes and my interviews confirm, this issue was raised already in the red-green coalition talks and there was a consensus that Germany should not support such policy. Since Clinton was not keen on a military confrontation in the Gulf either, Iraq did not play a major role for the following two years.

The election of George W. Bush in 2000 presented a setback to the so far casual bilateral relations. The secular liberal-left milieu of the red-green coalition was not an easy match with the conservative and evangelical leanings of the new president and his aides. Key signatories of the 1998 letter to Clinton were appointed to leading foreign policy positions. In a blow to Germany's visions of global governance, the administration refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and the statute of the International Criminal Court. The attacks of 11 September 2001 changed the agenda of the Bush administration, putting foreign and security affairs on its very top. The initial reaction to the attacks was one of shock and solidarity. Already on 12 November, Schröder reassured the United States of Germany's "unlimited – I emphasise: unlimited – solidarity" (Schröder 2001a). Developing the point one week later, he made clear that this covered also military operations. However, what went 'almost unnoticed' (Harnisch 2004: 2) was a short paragraph in which Schröder actually posed a limit to the ostensibly unlimited. Germany was indeed to remain solidary, but she expected 'information and consultation' in return: "To risks – also in the military – is Germany ready, but not to adventures." (Schröder 2001b)

On the very same day, 19 September 2001, Fischer was talking to Paul Wolfowitz in Washington, who already presented him with the idea of extending the 'War on Terror' from terrorist networks to their state supporters – what would become the 'rogue states' (Fischer 2011: 27, 29, Hofmann 2003). One day later, the Project for the New American Century (2001) came up with another letter, putting the case in blunt words: "even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the [11 September 2001] attack, any strategy aiming at the eradication of terrorism and its sponsors must include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq." Such voices caused concern in Berlin, but they were not regarded as official policy. The priority was Afghanistan and Germany was to be on America's side in this matter. In order to persuade sceptical left-wingers from both coalition parties, Schröder connected Germany's participation to a confidence vote. On 16 November, the Bundestag backed the government and decided that Germany would support the US-led operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, but under the condition that the participation of Germany's forces was possible "in other states than Afghanistan only with the agreement of

the respective government” (Deutscher Bundestag 2001a: 4; Harnisch 2004 cites this example). In a Bundestag debate on 28 November, Fischer also made his reservations with respect to regime change in Baghdad public, highlighting that the US debate on Iraq was not finished, yet that the Europeans “view an extension [of the ‘War on Terror’] on Iraq with extreme scepticism.” (Fischer in Deutscher Bundestag 2001b: 20111; see also Harnisch 2004)

## **2002: Rhetorical confrontation and bilateral diplomacy**

Since the first days of 2002, the possibility of a military confrontation with Iraq was increasingly present in the US public debate. As Henry Kissinger (2002) expressed it in the Washington Post on 13 January 2002, the operations in Afghanistan were drawing to an end and it was time to initiate a ‘Phase II’ in the ‘War on Terror’. On 29 January, George W. Bush delivered one of the most anticipated State of the Union Addresses in recent history, which included Iraq – together with Iran, North Korea and terrorist networks worldwide – in the ‘axis of evil’ (Bush 2002a). Bush’s message was reiterated in Germany only days later in the speeches of Paul Wolfowitz (2002) and John McCain (2002) at the annual Munich Security Conference. McCain made it clear that the ‘War on Terror’ had only begun: “Afghanistan represents only the first front in our global war on terror. The next front is apparent, and we should not shirk from acknowledging it. A terrorist resides in Baghdad [...]” (McCain 2002: 18).

Schröder managed to squeeze a visit to Washington between the State of the Union Address and the Munich Security Conference and was accepted by Bush on 31 January. Different interpretations of this meeting were the first among misunderstandings and miscommunications that eventually resulted in a breakdown of relations between the two leaders. The chancellor maintains that he demanded a UNSC resolution for the possible war, that he was assured that nothing was decided with respect to Iraq and that he was promised consultations (Schröder 2007: 197). The White House version of the meeting, however, was that Schröder, while raising objections, eventually promised not to stand in the way should the Americans decide for an attack (Joetze 2010: 93-95, Fischer 2011: 117). These different interpretations would reappear in mutual accusations of deception only a few months later.

The State of the Union and the Munich Security Conference made the differences over Iraq visible and initiated a round of debates in Germany. On the part of the government, ambivalence and denial of conflict was the official line up until August (Harnisch 2004: 3). There was no need for expressing a clear position, Schröder argues, since the internal debate in the United States was still ongoing and there was no reason to mistrust Bush’s promises

(Schröder 2007: 210). Berlin placed its bets on the ‘realists’ in the administration, above all Colin Powell, who was seen as a ‘friend’ (Volmer 2013: 141, similarly also Fischer 2011) and trusted to win the argument. This official line notwithstanding, there were already some critical remarks dropped by leading members of the government, signalling the rising diplomatic tensions. Most visibility was granted to Fischer’s interview from 12 February, in which he refused to speculate about US intentions regarding Iraq, yet distanced himself from the Bush administration by saying that “alliance partners are not satellites” (Fischer 2002a). There was a first Bundestag debate specifically on the issue of the possible war in Iraq on 22 February, in which the right-wing opposition criticised Fischer’s comments as irresponsible and anti-Americanist.

Amidst the growing tensions, Bush visited Berlin on 22-23 May and was met by anti-war demonstrations. The Bundestag was summoned for an extraordinary session, whose only agenda was the president’s speech, which, as Schröder recalls (2007: 198), surprised the audience by its moderate tone. Bush appealed to the history and shared values of the German-American relationship. With a hint on Iraq, he said that “[t]he magnitude of our shared responsibilities makes our disagreements look so small.” (Bush 2002b) Crucially, he promised a comprehensive approach and consultations:

Our response [to terrorism and the states that support it] will be reasoned, and focused, and deliberate. We will use more than our military might. We will cut off terrorist finances, apply diplomatic pressure, and continue to share intelligence. America will consult closely with our friends and allies at every stage. (ibid.)

During the meetings with the chancellor, Iraq was mostly off the agenda and the parties also agreed to keep it out of the headlines (Harnisch 2004: 9, Joetze 2010: 96-97). There is no evidence available regarding the existence of an agreement not to use Iraq in the upcoming elections, which was cited by American sources later on (Harnisch 2004: 9). In this respect, the Berlin summit resulted in another misunderstanding, since both parties appeared to have received what they wanted, yet their preferences were clearly different at that point of time. The apparent harmony did not last long due to an increasing number of warning signals coming from the United States (Schröder 2007: 210, Volmer 2013: 143). On 1 July, Bush gave his speech at West Point, in which he outlined the core elements of the ‘Bush Doctrine’, with emphasis on pre-emptive strikes (Bush 2002c). The debate escalated as the New York Times and the Washington Post published leaks of Iraq war plans (Harnisch 2004: 9, Joetze 2010: 97). Meanwhile, most German politicians were on holiday before the hot start of the campaign leading to the parliamentary elections on 22 September. On 30 July, a meeting between the chancellor and the foreign minister was scheduled in Berlin.

Fischer pressed Schröder to take a public stance on Iraq as soon as possible. According to Fischer (2011) as well as other commentators, the two reached the agreement that Germany's opposition will be taken to the public (Joetze 2010: 98).

On 1 August, the SPD leadership gathered to discuss the upcoming campaign. At a certain point, Schröder left to give an interview to the ZDF TV news. Surprising not only many in the public and the opposition, but even some of his closest collaborators who were in the room (Struck 2010: 88), Schröder said that the 'danger of war' in the Middle East will be one of the key topics of the campaign (cited in Hofmann 2003). Schröder repeated that Germany would indeed act in solidarity with the international community and the United States, but was "not available for adventures" (cited in Deutsche Bundesregierung 2002a). According to my interviews with SPD sources, the staging and wording of the statement was Schröder's own and was merely announced rather than discussed with the party. These still considerably vague remarks started a period of unprecedented alienation in German-American relations, also because they were not communicated to the US prior to the public presentation. They initiated an emotional debate about the relationship to Washington, which would dominate the discourse of the Iraq crisis and overshadow all other issues.

During an opening rally for the election campaign on 5 August in Hannover, Schröder further clarified his position: "Yes to pressure on Saddam Hussein. We must make sure that the international inspectors can [go] to Iraq. But playing with war and military intervention – I can only warn against that. That cannot be done with us, ladies and gentlemen." (Schröder 2002b: 8) Schröder's announcements marked a foreign policy change. From now on, Germany was not ambiguous any more, but criticised the possible war and rejected to send soldiers. Since Schröder also added that the "time of the cheque-book diplomacy is definitively over" (ibid.), it appeared to imply that Berlin would not participate in the war in any way. Importantly, Schröder was the first US-allied head of government to speak against the war in such a manner in public. Given that Germany was not a member of the UN Security Council and other European states remained ambivalent, critical rhetoric and refusal to participate in the potential attack were pretty much the whole policy at that point, since Germany had only very limited options to build alliances or influence events within multilateral institutions.

The anti-war stance was shared within the red-green coalition almost unanimously, even though, as my interviews showed, there were different accents with respect to what the next steps should be or how this should be handled diplomatically. It also resonated with public opinion. In a poll conducted in early August, 62 % of respondents preferred "no form of participation" in the Iraq war (Infratest dimap 2002). What was much less consensual,

however, was the way the issue was framed and contextualised. Already before Iraq, Schröder was noted for his talk about ‘self-confident’, ‘mature’, or ‘normal’ foreign policy – although the novelty of the language was often overemphasised (Hellmann, Weber, and Sauer 2008). Against this background, the choice of *deutscher Weg* (‘German way’) as SPD’s election slogan was a gift for critics, who would lament it as heralding Germany’s return to *Sonderweg* (‘special path’) and *Realpolitik*. As Fischer (2011: 147) remembers, “our critics and opponents could not have wished for anything better. Nationalism from the left! Anti-Americanism! Threat to Germany’s integration with the West!” Fischer, together with most foreign policy experts from the two parties, would rather frame his criticism in terms of lacking evidence for the links between Iraq, terrorism and WMD, the supposedly functioning containment regime that prevented Iraq from becoming an immediate threat, the destabilisation of the region that an intervention could bring or its adverse effects on the international coalition against terrorism (e.g. Fischer 2002c).

The ‘German way’ was toned down later in the campaign and Schröder repeatedly insisted that it was always meant as referring only to socio-economic issues, not foreign policy (Schröder 2002d).<sup>28</sup> Moreover, while the chancellor tried to limit his criticisms to the Iraq case, repeating that Germany and the United States were fighting terrorism side by side, the space for anti-American language was already opened. Acting chairman of the SPD parliamentary group Ludwig Stiegler compared the United States to imperial Rome, Bush to Caesar Augustus and the US ambassador Dan Coats to Peter Abrassimow, a former Soviet ambassador to East Germany known for interfering in the GDR’s domestic politics (Joetze 2010: 100; Beste et al. 2003c). The lowest point was reached when Germany’s Justice Minister Herta Däubler-Gmelin reportedly approximated Bush’s war plans to Hitler’s, arguing that both were designed as a distraction from domestic issues (Joetze 2010: 100–101). Schröder wrote a personal letter to Bush (reprinted in Szabo 2004: 30), in which he apologised for the hurt caused to Bush, yet insisted that the remarks were only ‘alleged’ and that the minister had denied them. In retaliation, Rice called the bilateral relations ‘poisoned’ (cited in Wolffe, Simonian and Williamson 2002) and Bush failed to congratulate Schröder on his re-election.

As my interviewees admitted, the anti-war rhetoric paralysed the opposition, which was prepared rather for a campaign revolving around the economic record of the government. The centre-right Christian bloc CDU/CSU, running with the CSU’s chairman Edmund Stoiber as the chancellor-candidate, was consistently ahead in the polls for months before the

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<sup>28</sup> My reading of the Hannover speech or Schröder’s article in *BILD* from 8 August (Schröder 2002d) suggests otherwise, since Schröder here uses the ‘German way’ as an overarching theme, which connects a variety of issues, foreign policy included.

elections.<sup>29</sup> CDU/CSU focused on criticising the government for anti-Americanism, unilateralism, sacrificing national interests for election purposes, breaking the European unity and leading Germany into isolation (e.g. the speeches of Angela Merkel, Wolfgang Schäuble and Edmund Stoiber in Deutscher Bundestag 2002b). However, they struggled to offer a counter-narrative; first, because of the nature of public opinion and second, since only very few CDU/CSU members actually felt like sending German troops to Iraq. As the gap in the polls was narrowing, a rift formed between the CDU, which ran a more pro-US and anti-government line, and the CSU, which grew increasingly sceptical to the prospect of a war (Harnisch 2004: 12, Volmer 2013: 145). Stoiber himself zig-zagged, going even beyond Schröder's position by suggesting he would not allow the use of the American bases in Germany for the war effort at one point, while denying it as a misunderstanding at another (Weiland 2002). In the narrowest result in German history, the CDU finished second in the elections with only 6 000 votes and 0.01 per cent less than the SPD.<sup>30</sup>

Struggling between the 'opposition reflex' (as one party member put in in an interview) and the tradition of military reluctance promoted by the party grandee and former foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the market-liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) chose equidistance from the German and American governments (Harnisch 2004). Criticising the red-green coalition along similar lines as the CDU, they also targeted US unilateralism and highlighted the value of multilateral arrangements and international law (e.g. Guido Westerwelle in Deutscher Bundestag 2002b). The FDP remained behind the Green Party in the polls, which contributed to keeping Schröder in the chancellery. Even gloomier was the fate of the post-communist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS). The coalition deprived it of one of its traditional platforms – pacifism and principled rejection of German military deployments. The PDS launched an attack from the left, attempting to undermine Schröder's and Fischer's credibility on the basis of the red-green government's involvement in Kosovo and Afghanistan (Wolfgang Gehrcke and Roland Claus in Deutscher Bundestag 2002b). Resorting to much stronger anti-American and anti-imperialist accents brought the PDS no luck and the party failed to pass the 5 % hurdle for entering the Bundestag, gaining only two seats for directly elected candidates.

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<sup>29</sup> CDU (Christian Democratic Union) and CSU (Christian Social Union) are separate parties that cooperate in a permanent coalition on the national level. CSU runs only in Bavaria, the larger sister party covers the remaining 15 federal states. The parties agree on a joint manifesto, present a single chancellor-candidate and form a joint faction in the Bundestag.

<sup>30</sup> This is important as an indicator of CDU/CSU's fall during the campaign, as the Christian bloc was leading the polls by a safe margin of 5-7 % as late as in mid-August and was broadly expected to win. Even a narrow victory, however, would have kept the CDU/CSU in opposition because of the good performance of the Greens, the SPD's preferred coalition partner.

While the Germans were campaigning, Iraq became a priority also for the international community. The US rhetoric was ever more aggressive, but the plot was to get another twist. In a speech to the United Nations General Assembly, Bush announced that the administration would first take the case to the UN Security Council (Bush 2002d). In response, Iraq declared that she will readmit the inspections that had been banned from the country for almost four years. These two steps were not expected in Berlin and Schröder's rejection of Germany's participation was thus unconditional. "As a result, the government faced a formidable dilemma: the more convincingly the US presented its case at the United Nations, the less legitimate Germany's opposition [...] appeared to be" (Harnisch 2004: 13).

With no time to waste, Berlin's politicians and diplomats had to get back to business right after the election. According to Fischer, there were two principal yet contradictory foreign policy goals: repairing relations with the US and preventing the Iraq war (Fischer 2011: 174). At that point, Germany was left with limited options, since she had no opportunities to influence the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) negotiations and other EU and NATO states still remained ambiguous. Germany's policies thus focused above all on bilateral relations to Washington, which functioned on two parallel tracks. On the political level, they were characterised by the nearly absolute breakdown of communication between Bush and Schröder. On the working level, in contrast, relations remained close to business as usual (Joetze 2010:101; an interview also confirmed this).

On 8 November, the Security Council adopted UNSC Resolution 1441. The document stated that Iraq was in breach of a number of previous resolutions and should receive "a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations" (United Nations Security Council 2002: 3). Baghdad should pass all information regarding its weapons programmes within 30 days and allow thorough inspections immediately. In the case of non-compliance, the inspection teams were to alert the Council, which would "convene immediately upon receipt of a report" (ibid.: 5). The UNSC, however, was only asked to convene, but not necessarily to decide on the matter. This presented the crucial ambiguity in the resolution, since it was not clear whether the document, which uses the usual code phrase 'serious consequences', already authorised the use of force, or whether a brand new resolution was needed. According to Fischer (2011: 179), this ambivalence was intentional and a necessity for the document to pass. To Volmer (2013: 144) it was a trap for the opponents of a military action, since the burden of evidence was put on Iraq. Nevertheless, the resolution was welcomed across the German political spectrum. The government, again, was in a peculiar position. In the words of a leading opposition MP Ruprecht Polenz (CDU), the chancellor "welcomed a UN resolution, for whose realisation the Federal Government did nothing, absolutely

nothing; rather the contrary is the case.” (Ruprecht Polenz in Deutscher Bundestag 2002e: 650)

While Washington and a number of European cities witnessed a series of large anti-war demonstrations during October and November, American war planning came to the stage of delivering cooperation requests to other countries. An extensive list was passed also to German authorities, including transit and overflight rights for US forces, use of American bases in Germany, protection of these installations by the Germans, delivery of anti-WMD anti-missile systems to countries at risk of Iraqi retaliation, units of military police for the occupation of Iraq and participation in reconstructing the country (Joetze 2010: 154). On 27 November, Schröder announced that transit and overflight rights will be granted in the event of war (Deutsche Bundesregierung 2002b). The ‘definitive course’ was, as Fischer (2011: 192) recalls, agreed on 20 December 2002. All but the last two demands on the list (military police and participation in reconstruction) were accepted. German territory became paramount for the war effort. The Bundeswehr patrolled the US bases, relieving approximately 5 000 US Army soldiers for other tasks (Joetze 2010: 154-155). Patriot systems were delivered to Israel and Turkey and a much discussed unit of six anti-WMD reconnaissance vehicles was to remain in Kuwait, where it was placed under the Operation Enduring Freedom mandate from November 2001.

The policy of vocal opposition thus became complemented by tacit, although not secret, cooperation in the war effort. Germany’s assistance went further than that of most countries of the ‘coalition of the willing’ – a member as important as Turkey, for instance, refused to allow the use of her territory (Anderson 2011: 127). According to Joetze (2010: 154-155), Germany’s support was crucial for the smooth course of the war, together with that of Britain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. This contradiction of opposing the war while making it possible played an important part in the public discourse and presents the analytical and political problem that will be given much attention in the following chapters of this thesis.

### **2003: Diplomatic showdown and the path to war**

In January 2003, Germany started her term as a non-permanent UN Security Council member. By that point, the US had already been moving troops to the Persian Gulf, raising the pressure on the Iraqi regime and the international community. The UNSC seat provided the German government with the option to pursue a third line of foreign policy: besides vocal disagreement and tacit cooperation, the Germans could now exercise influence also through direct engagement in top-level multilateral diplomacy. Their hands, however, were rather tied, since Germany was still one of the only very few countries to openly oppose the



war. Other UNSC members, notably the veto powers France and Russia, were keeping their options open. Still, there was some leeway between the ostensibly uncompromising anti-war stance and the possibility of shaping US policies through entanglement in UNSC negotiations. This was because no policy was articulated with respect to a possible second resolution that would authorise attacking Iraq beyond the ambiguities of UNSC 1441. The government had only ruled out its participation in a military operation, but nothing was said about voting in the Council, which soon became a source of controversy.

In an interview published in *Der Spiegel*, Joschka Fischer refused to comment on how Germany would vote in the case of a war-legitimising resolution (Fischer 2002l). In his memoir, Fischer (2011: 194) argues that this was part of his attempts to differentiate the UN-vote from the rejection of the Iraq war in order to prevent Germany's isolation within the Council. Unsurprisingly, this was met with criticism, especially on the left wings of the SPD and the Greens. The issue was resolved by another unilateral move by Schröder. "I put it a bit further here and now than what I have otherwise formulated in this question: Do not count on it that Germany would vote for a war-legitimising resolution," the chancellor said on 21 January in Goslar, Lower Saxony at a rally before the upcoming regional election (cited in Beste et al. 2003c: 57). The remarks, which were not discussed within the party or the cabinet (ibid.; personal interview with a source from the SPD) brought Schröder criticism even from his own ranks. In an interview, one SPD foreign policy expert saw this as the only principal mistake in Schröder's Iraq policy. Fischer goes even further, arguing that Germany's manoeuvring space was 'reduced to zero' and all that could be done was wait to see whether France would join, or whether Germany would be left alone (Fischer 2011: 201).

The positions of other European states, however, started to materialise. On 22 January, Schröder and the French president Jacques Chirac agreed to coordinate their policies, initiating what would become the core of the anti-war 'axis'. One week later, heads of states and governments of eight NATO states (Spain, Portugal, Italy, UK, Denmark, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) published the so-called Letter of Eight, a carefully-worded pledge of support for US policies (Aznar et al. 2003). This was followed by a similar letter by foreign ministers of ten additional East European countries on 5 February (Vilnius Group 2003). The two declarations drew the boundaries of the pro-American camp. For Schröder (2007: 229) and Fischer (2011: 206), they marked the split of Europe and the chance of formulating a common EU position was missed. In contrast, the CDU/CSU faction put together a motion in support of the Letter of Eight (Deutscher Bundestag 2003a), which, unsurprisingly, failed in the Bundestag. The rifts between the two international groupings became further visible during the Munich Security Conference on 7-9 February, which hit

the headlines through the televised exchange between Joschka Fischer and Donald Rumsfeld. Fischer briefly switched to English and addressed Rumsfeld directly: “Excuse me, I am not convinced!” This became one of the iconic moments of the Iraq crisis and can still be watched on YouTube in many copies.

Since the Iraqi government had apparently seized the ‘final opportunity’ granted by UNSC 1441, the central issue was no longer whether it cooperated, but rather if this cooperation was genuine and sufficient. Inspectors returned to the country in November 2002 and Iraq made an extensive declaration regarding her WMD programmes. Hans Blix, the head of the inspections team, delivered his first presentation to the Security Council on 27 January 2003. The message was mixed. Iraq has “on the whole cooperated rather well so far” with respect to the inspection process, especially by providing access (Blix 2003). The key issue, however, was the official declaration, which consisted of thousands of pages, yet included a large number of omissions and inconsistencies, which Blix was vocal to criticise. His language, nevertheless, was far from presenting Iraq as an imminent threat.

This was not the message the US administration was trying to put through. Therefore, Colin Powell made a special UNSC appearance of his own on 5 February. Talking for more than 75 minutes, Powell presented what is now known to be false or misleading ‘evidence’ that Iraq had been pursuing WMD programmes and actively deceiving the inspections: intercepted telephone calls, satellite images, charts etc. This presentation was supposed to put forward the *casus belli* against Iraq. Powell took German politicians by surprise and stirred a controversy, since some of the materials shown were actually handed to the US by the German Intelligence Service (BND). These were known to most foreign policy experts, since the BND had already briefed the relevant committee in the Bundestag. The content of the briefings is still classified at the time of writing. Intriguingly, however, the interpretations of what was said are very different, above all with respect to the status of the information delivered to the parliamentarians. In brief, some participants have argued – in public or in my interviews – that the BND highlighted the unverified nature of the intelligence. Others, in contrast, have maintained that such doubts were not foregrounded during the briefings.

If there was any hope that Powell’s presentation would rally support behind the US administration, the opposite was the case. On 10 February, Russia grouped with France and Germany and the three governments published a joint memorandum. The document called for further inspections and argued that there still was ‘an alternative to war’: “Russia, Germany and France are determined to give all chances to the peaceful disarmament of Iraq.” (Gemeinsame Irak-Erklärung von Frankreich, Deutschland und Russland 2003). On

the one hand, this nascent anti-war and anti-American coalition marked a new phase for Berlin, in which “Germany does not fight against isolation any more, but forges an alliance” (Beste et al. 2003: 60). On the other hand, unlike Schröder, neither Chirac nor Putin had explicitly ruled out their support for a second resolution in principle; they only linked their policies to the results of the inspections.<sup>31</sup> These were presented by Blix on two more occasions, on 14 February and 7 March, with a very similar tone as in January: Iraq was generally cooperating, but much more could be done. No WMD were found so far, yet there were still important gaps and omissions, even though certain improvements were recorded.

Besides the UN, the European Union was another important venue for Germany’s diplomacy. The division over Iraq came at a very sensitive time, as the EU was working hard both on the ‘widening’ (the treaty of accession with no less than ten new states was signed in April 2003) and the ‘deepening’ dimensions of its reform (the draft European Constitution was presented in July 2003). Ironically, the member states were deeply split exactly at the time when they were calling for a stronger role for Europe in the world. Both the government and the opposition repeatedly declared that a common European position would have been the preferred option. This, however, seemed out of reach. A surprising breakthrough appeared to have been made during the summit on Iraq on 17 February, which adopted a joint memorandum (Council of the European Union 2003). The language, nevertheless, brought a curious compromise in which everyone got what they wanted. The war-opposing Germans, French and Belgians pushed through the commitment to disarm Iraq peacefully, yet the pro-US group inserted the explicit acknowledgement of force as a last resort. While the government used the document as a proof of its successful European policy, for the opposition it was too little too late.

Meanwhile, the UNSC debate was approaching its climax. On 24 February, a draft resolution was presented by the US, UK and Spain (2003). It had a single operative clause, stating that the Council “[d]ecides that Iraq has failed to take the final opportunity afforded to it [by] resolution 1441 (2002)”. This would unleash the ‘serious consequences’ foreseen by UNSC 1441. Germany, France and Russia responded with their own memorandum, which reiterated that the inspections were not finished and showed certain progress, suggesting that the inspectors were given additional 120 days for their work. “As yet, the conditions for the use of force against Iraq are not satisfied.” (Pleuger et al. 2003: 2) This put the two parties on

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<sup>31</sup> Intriguingly, Harnisch (2004: 15) speculates that there still was a certain leeway left even after Goslar, since Schröder said nothing at all about the possibility of Germany’s *abstention*. Of course, there is no way to verify how a particular remark was intended and there is no other evidence to support this claim. On the contrary, Schröder (2007: 231) makes the equally unverifiable claim that he was ready to step down rather than compromise on the matter. However, Harnisch’s interpretation illustrates how complex the situation was and how misleading it is to see Germany’s policies in terms of a simple ‘no to the Iraq war’.

collision course with very little room for manoeuvre. From now on, there were two camps, both able to veto the proposals of the other. Germany was now not only opposing US moves, but also actively organising counter-initiatives and lobbying other countries behind them.

From that point, the two blocks only consolidated their positions. On 5 March, the foreign ministers Ivanov, de Villepin and Fischer presented another memorandum, this time clearly stating that “we will not let a proposed resolution pass that would authorize the use of force” (Villepin et al. 2003). Two days later, following Hans Blix’s third UNSC presentation, the draft resolution was amended so as to give Iraq ten final days to comply with the requirements of UNSC 1441. US diplomacy used the gap for a final round of lobbying in the Council. However, the decisive blow came already on 10 March. First, Ivanov confirmed Russia’s decision to veto even the amended resolution. Only hours later, Chirac gave a prime time TV interview, in which he announced that the resolution will be vetoed also by France. The extent of irritation that Chirac’s confrontational remarks stirred in Washington (the infamous introduction of ‘freedom fries’ in the Congress happened on the very next day) was matched by the relief it brought in Berlin. As Fischer’s memoir (2011) and a number of my interviews confirm, until Chirac’s TV appearance, many members of the coalition were still anxious that France would back down, leaving Germany on the side of Russia and China at best, or alone with Syria as the only other UNSC member at worst.

The second resolution was never put to a vote and was eventually withdrawn on 17 March, when President Bush issued a unilateral ultimatum of his own. Stating that “[p]eaceful efforts to disarm the Iraq regime have failed again and again because we are not dealing with peaceful men,” Bush gave Saddam Hussein and his family 48 hours to leave the country. “Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict commenced at a time of our choosing.” (Bush 2003) The rest is known. A US-led coalition attacked Iraq on 20 March 2003, defeating the regime within weeks. Despite Germany’s active opposition in the UNSC and elsewhere, her territory was a crucial transport crossroads. The Bundeswehr patrolled US bases and remained deployed in the ostensibly unrelated missions in Afghanistan, Kuwait and the Mediterranean. German equipment was sent to Israel and Turkey. Unbeknownst to the public or even parliamentarians at the time, two BND officers operated in Baghdad during the attacks and passed intelligence to US agencies.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> This became a major political issue only in 2006. The ARD television aired a programme, which documented the activities of the agents during the war and even argued they had directly assisted in identifying bombing targets. The Bundestag launched an extensive investigation into the role of the BND in the Iraq war. The final report came out in 2009 and rejected the accusations that the agents were directly involved in war-related activities – a conclusion not accepted by two of the seven members of the investigation committee.

Two additional issues deserve to be discussed. First, besides criticising the government, what did the opposition do after the elections and especially in the last months and weeks before the attacks? While the FDP was rather passive, keeping its equidistance between Bush and Schröder (and sinking deep into a leadership crisis which had nothing to do with Iraq) and the now extra-parliamentary PDS had to rely largely on organising demonstrations, the role of the CDU was more remarkable. Angela Merkel launched active shadow diplomacy towards the United States. On 20 February 2003, Merkel's article 'Schroeder Doesn't Speak for All Germans' was published in *The Washington Post* (Merkel 2003b), in which she took her critique of the government to the American public and signalled a carefully-worded support of the US policies: "Anyone who rejects military action as a last resort weakens the pressure that needs to be maintained on dictators and consequently makes a war not less but more likely." (ibid.) The article was a prologue to Merkel's high profile US visit on 24-28 February, during which she met Rumsfeld, Cheney and Rice. As a commentary from that time puts it, the attention of her hosts easily matched that given to official state visits (Feldmeyer 2003). The symbolic aspect of the visit was clear and strong; it actually resonated even more than a decade later, when I was conducting my fieldwork: almost all interviewed members of the red-green coalition brought up Merkel's actions, with notable aversion and terms like 'prostration' and 'Canossa', even though I never explicitly asked about it.

However, does that mean that the CDU supported the Bush line and became part of the 'coalition of the willing', as the accusation went? (Schröder in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d: 1879) Curiously, CDU's and Merkel's positions were not much clearer than those of the government. On the one hand, the Christian Democrats supported the Letter of Eight and even the US ultimatum from 17 March (Merkel in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003f: 2735). At least some influential voices considered the inspections a failure and argued that Saddam's regime was an imminent danger: "The reason no smoking gun has been found doesn't mean one doesn't exist, but that Saddam has hidden it carefully," CDU's foreign policy speaker Friedbert Pflüger wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, mimicking the rhetoric of US hardliners (Pflüger 2003a). On the other hand, the CDU was certainly not pushing for an attack. Even the staunchest Atlanticists in the party admitted that the US administration had not done everything to their liking and that the UNSC failed 'as a whole' (Pflüger 2003c; Wolfgang Schäuble in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003g: 2886). Most interestingly, as remarks from the time of the crisis suggest and my interviews with CDU parliamentarians confirm, the Christian Democrats did not want to do much differently in practice. They refused sending ground troops with the argument that the US never asked for them, citing the government-sanctioned measures like the granting of overflight rights, retaining the anti-WMD unit in Kuwait and

supporting Turkey with air surveillance and anti-rocket systems as their preferred policy (Merkel 2003a), adding only military ships and medical units beyond the commitment of the red-green government (Deutscher Bundestag 2003c: 3). To accuse the CDU of bandwagoning with the neoconservatives is therefore as misleading as portraying the government as staunchly opposing the war.

The second issue relates to the shift in the official language around the actual attack. Already in the last days before the invasion, the government notably changed the tone of their opposition. Blocking the war seemed improbable, even though Schröder claimed to keep fighting to prevent it, “be it in the last minute or second” (Schröder 2003b: 6). At the same time, the worst case scenario of being the lonely outlier had been avoided and Germany had become part of a broad international coalition. While still preaching peace, the emphasis shifted to mending fences with the United States. The rhetoric focused on hoping that the war would end soon, the number of victims would be as low as possible and that Iraq could hope for a new beginning (Schröder 2003f). Peter Struck’s comments for the *Deutschlandfunk* radio are illustrative for the relation to Washington: “Regarding our personal relationship to the United States, it naturally became more complicated through the difference in this question. But as soon as the war is over, we will very quickly be able to return to a normal working relationship.” (Struck 2003: 37) The change of rhetoric was followed by a number of practical steps, through which Berlin supported the efforts at rebuilding and stabilising Iraq (see Harnisch 2004: 19-23). All the disagreement nevertheless, the Germans appeared to wish to go back to business as usual as fast as possible.

### **Carving out the problem: Inconsistency, emotionality, existentiality**

Problematisation starts from the narratives that are already in place. Some of them have been presented in the literature review, especially the civilian power and the normalisation theses that have dominated the scholarship on German foreign policy. Others have been sketched in this chapter and will be further discussed in more detail in the remainder of the dissertation. These narratives have been told by different people – politicians, journalists, academics – at different times from 2002 until the present day and are constitutive of what we think of as the ‘Iraq crisis’ and Germany’s foreign policy towards it. Tropes, ‘facts’ and interpretations that serve as building blocks for these broader stories are heterogeneous and their number is immense. Therefore, it would be far off the mark to summarise the debate by reducing it to one or two dominant narratives. However, for the purpose of constructing the research problem, it is useful to sketch the two ideal-typical stories that constitute the opposite ends of

the spectrum within which other narratives are being told. This helps construct the problem by contrasting it to contending problematisations that have appeared in the discourse.

In 2013, an article titled ‘Schröder’s no to the military option in Iraq’ appeared on the website of the German Bundestag to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the debate (Deutscher Bundestag 2013). This title sums up the dominant narrative that Germany ‘said no’ and rejected the war in Iraq. Unsurprisingly, it is in these terms that Schröder himself puts it on his website (‘The no to the Iraq war’, Schröder n.d.) and it is indeed the interpretation delivered by most of my interviewees from the SPD and the Greens. Interestingly enough, the language of many academics is little different and includes the “resounding ‘NO’ [...] in the matter of the Iraq War” (Leithner 2009: 86), “Schröder’s no to Iraq” (Wittlinger 2010: 130) or the assertion that “Germany opposed the war [...] strongly” (Forsberg 2005: 213-214). Even authors who are otherwise sensitive to the complexities and tensions in Berlin’s foreign policies cannot seem to avoid to make ‘Germany’s lonely rejection’ a chapter title (Joetze 2010: 85) or even label the whole book ‘Germany says NO’ (Dettke 2009). While disagreeing in their explanations and normative viewpoints, all of these accounts share the common ground in the ostensible ‘fact’ that Germany rejected the war, which also presents the key problem that these narratives are trying to illuminate.

The polar opposite argument has been less successful. According to this narrative, the anti-war rhetoric was a mere exercise in public relations. The government cynically played public opinion to win the elections, while Germany participated in the war rather extensively in fact and provided pretty much everything that was ever requested by granting the US transit rights, patrolling the US bases, sharing intelligence etc. This story has been told above all by the press and the opposition – both left-wing and right-wing – at the time of the Iraq crisis (Schäuble in Deutscher Bundestag 2002c; Merkel and Petra Pau in Deutscher Bundestag 2002f). It has also appeared in interviews with parliamentarians critical of the position of the red-green government, who either felt that Schröder’s rhetorical opposition to German involvement was misleading since the US had never planned to ask for military support (the right-wing argument), or that the government broke the promise not to get involved in the war effort (the left-wing argument). In this narrative, the problem is the mismatch between ‘words’ and ‘deeds’, which is typically explained with reference to Schröder’s supposed opportunism.

I have already started responding to these narratives in the first three sections, where I highlighted multiple contradictions that complicate the picture. To prepare for a direct confrontation, it is worth summarising the conclusions that I have reached so far in an explicit answer to the first question on the agenda for a foreign policy analysis: What exactly

was Germany's foreign policy in the Iraq crisis? In my reading, it consisted of contradictory sets of practices which were engaged in at different times, yet eventually all performed simultaneously in the first months of 2003. The first of them included the *rhetorical opposition* to the US war plans, as first articulated by Schröder in August 2002. Part and parcel of this was the refusal of Germany's military involvement in the war. The second aspect was the *tacit cooperation in the war effort*, consisting of the acceptance of most American demands raised during the autumn of 2002, which then resulted in various civilian and military practices such as patrolling the US bases and sharing intelligence. The third part was the *active anti-war diplomacy* that was conducted bilaterally, in the United Nations and in the European Union above all in January-March 2003.

Where does such an answer lead in terms of problematisation? First, it points to the gaps, inconsistencies and silences in the two basic narratives. With respect to the former story, it becomes difficult to see what exactly the question was, to which Germany was supposed to say 'no'. Germany's foreign policy was not a matter of a single heroic choice. In fact, the government said 'no' on multiple occasions, always specifying and amending the previous one: Schröder's 'no' in August 2002 addressed Germany's military participation and the war in principle, the January 2003 'no' related to the possibility of supporting the yet unwritten second resolution, whereas the joint Franco-Russo-German 'no' of March 2003 rejected the already existing draft. More importantly, however, there was also the 'yes' to many practical issues which made the 'rejected' war much easier, if not possible at all and which complicates Germany's anti-war credentials. Similarly, there are cracks also in the 'opportunism' narrative. Had the opposition been only a campaign trick, it could have been toned down when the elections were over. However, Germany's opposition intensified and arguably did most damage to the US cause precisely at that point, in particular in February and March 2003. It was only then that the counter-alliance in the UN Security Council, in which Germany played an important part, torpedoed the US-UK plan to get an additional mandate for the attack.

Second, the description of foreign policy as complex and consisting of a number of parallel practices leads directly to a problematisation of my own. *The first problem* lies in the very *inconsistency and contradictoriness of foreign policy practices* in the Iraq crisis. It is intriguing that German leaders invested so much energy and political capital in opposing and trying to prevent the war and at the same time actually did pretty much everything they were asked to make the war possible. When Fischer was having his public disagreement with Rumsfeld in Munich in February 2003, the Bundeswehr was already patrolling the US bases from which the war was being orchestrated. The same, however, can be said also about the CDU/CSU, which zig-zagged between the adoption of the US rhetoric and photo-ops with



the Bush administration on the one hand, and the assurances that force can only be the very last resort and that Germany would not have sent soldiers even under their government on the other hand. These ambiguities and contradictions are even more interesting in the context of a debate, in which virtually all politicians took great labour to appear as consistent and principled, claiming that very basic questions of Germany's post-war identity were at stake.

This leads directly to the *second problem*, which is the *emotional and existential nature of the debate*. While there was notable common ground between the preferences of different camps (Iraq must be disarmed, no German soldiers in Iraq, sceptical assessment of US unilateralism, primacy of international law), the tone of the debate was very confrontational and emotional. Iraq appeared to have hit a nerve, since rather than discussing the strategies of disarming Iraq or dealing with Saddam Hussein, the Germans were explicitly contemplating their post-war identity (similarly also Zehfuss 2007). Lessons of history, Germany's Western-ness and European-ness, the debt to the Americans for liberation and protection, civilian and multilateral norms, credibility and responsibility were all brought to the fore. Crucially, and this is what I mean by the existential nature, these tropes were very often articulated as an uncompromising, absolute choice with titanic consequences. It was only by acting such-and-such that Germany would reclaim and reaffirm her post-war identity for some, and conversely, for others it was precisely by acting such-and-such that she would damage it for good.

Ultimately, it is the juxtaposition of these two problems, the tension between the messy nature of everyday decisions and the passionate, absolute claims about them, that is most interesting and that forms the key focus of this thesis. In a nutshell, my problematisation of Germany's foreign policies in the Iraq crisis is therefore the following: *How can we explain Germany's inconsistent and contradictory policies in the context of absolute claims with respect to identity, history etc. within which they were articulated? And conversely, how can we explain the existential and emotional nature of the debate as long as the actual policies were equivocal and there was notable common ground between the rival positions?* It is these questions that present the 'explanandum' that will be unpacked in the remaining three chapters. They are analytically interesting and puzzling, since they scrape the smooth discursive surface and uncover tensions within 'social reality' that deserve to be reflected upon. They are also politically pertinent, since they point to the paramount issues of credibility of political leaders and the possibility of a principled policy, as well as shed light on the politics of obscuring the messy and ambiguous nature of policy decisions.

## **Conclusion**

There are two things to be taken from this chapter, which presented a historical account of the Iraq crisis that was interested above all in the contradictions and tensions within foreign policy practices and the narratives that make sense of them. First is the background knowledge of the peculiar development of Germany's foreign policies in 2002/2003, to which I will often refer to in my interpretations. It is only after 'looking' at Germany's policies in some detail that we can 'see' what is there to be understood, explained and criticised. My key argument was that Germany's policies in the Iraq crisis can hardly be understood as a resounding 'no', which seems to be the dominant narrative. Instead, Berlin pursued a complicated and contradictory course, combining rhetorical opposition, tacit cooperation and active anti-war diplomacy. Reinserting these complexities and shades of grey leads us to the second topic of the chapter, which was the construction of my research problem, defined in terms of the relationship between the inconsistency and contradiction in policies on the one hand, and the emotional and existential nature of the debate on the other hand. The following chapters will address this problems on the different levels of sedimentation, signification and affect.

## 7 | Social logics and patterning of practices

### Foreign policy at the intersection of multiple hegemonic logics

This chapter makes the first step towards untangling the inconsistencies of Germany's policies by focusing on the sedimented patterns that shape foreign policy and constitute the repetitive element of the tension between reproduction and change in practices. I will ask the second question from the foreign policy agenda, 'Which structural patterns made this foreign policy possible?', and answer it in terms of social logics. Social logics discern the rules, patterns and grammars of practices and thus reconstruct 'social reality' from the perspective of those participating in it (the epistemological mode of understanding). By focusing also on the structuring of discourses within which practices are embedded and of which the practitioners themselves may not be aware, they further contextualise self-understandings within a deeper analysis of the subject positions from which policymakers speak and act (the epistemological mode of explanation). Subject positions constitute the first element of subjectivity of the three discussed in this thesis; they are discursive positions with which we identify to enter society and gain a voice. These are defined both on the level of language, by the particular signifiers we identify with (woman, German, politician), and on the level of practices that enact them. Social logics help us characterise hegemony as a state of affairs, or the 'common sense' aspects of socio-political life in which radical contingency is concealed or 'forgotten'.

I have suggested that foreign policies in the current international order are governed by three basic social logics: state sovereignty, peaceful resolution and international communities. I will develop this argument by showing how these logics were present in the German discourse and how they shaped policies in the Iraq crisis. Let me remind that what follows is not a subsumptive application, in which a higher-order theory would be merely tested on a set of data. Instead, as I have argued earlier, my hypothesis regarding the three social logics was formulated also with the particular case in mind. I do not offer a straightforward march from the abstract to the concrete, but rather a circular process of enmeshing partial generalisations regarding foreign policy with readings and observations made from the empirical materials on the Iraq crisis. All the different elements are somewhat modified in the process, since they mutually contaminate each other during their articulation into the single narrative that is presented in this chapter. As a result, we know more about *both* Germany's foreign policies in the Iraq crisis, since we are able to arrange the messy multitude of empirical data according to the conceptual grid of social logics, *and* foreign

policies in the current world, since we can see how these partial generalisations interact with an empirical context.

The first section traces the logics in the executive and broader political arenas, which are read together with the German Basic Law and positioned within my general knowledge of German politics. In its predominant focus on discourses of the politicians, the section examines the ‘hole’ in the middle of the ‘broken window’. This is in part because foreign policy is a practice that can be performed only by a relatively few people who are positioned to do so.<sup>33</sup> Politicians are ‘privileged storytellers’ (Campbell 1993) who often give explicit accounts of foreign policy ‘rules’, ‘principles’ or ‘traditions’, which makes them a primary source for the construction of social logics. While these discussions could very well be led also in the media arena, my empirical research shows that explicit constructions of the ‘taken for granted’ in the newspapers was rather rare and did not really contest the discourses of the politicians on the level of social logics. Therefore, the media arena is not being drawn upon in this chapter. Since social logics are defined in terms of durability and repetition, in the second section I will step back from the Iraq crisis and contextualise my findings in respect of broader trends in German foreign policy before and beyond Iraq. In the third step, I will discuss the power effects of social logics by discussing how hegemonic orders are constructed from different social logics, how logics shape policies and how challenges to the hegemonic status quo are marginalised.

### **The ‘common sense’ of German foreign policy: Sovereignty, peace and internationalism**

In this section, I outline the three structuring principles that constitute the hegemonic ‘common sense’ of German foreign policy: the social logics of state sovereignty, peaceful resolution and international communities. The emphasis is on mapping each of the three logics individually and showing the way it was reproduced in language and practice and materialised in institutions, while the politics of their mutual relations will be accounted for later.

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<sup>33</sup> A challenge to this argument could point out the role of the countless members of bureaucracies, diplomatic corps or armed forces in enacting foreign policies ‘on the ground’. I agree. This is a limitation of my account, but not necessarily a problem. The focus of the thesis is on the making of decisions on the top level and the political contexts in which this happens. Detailed studies of the role of bureaucracies would be a welcome complement.

### a) Logic of state sovereignty

The first social logic that structures the discourse is the *logic of state sovereignty*. As argued earlier, this is the ‘Westphalian’ logic of inter-*national* relations that firmly separates the domestic from the international, the ‘inside’ from the ‘outside’ (Walker 1993), thereby constituting states as the primary political units in the international arena. It constructs a hierarchy of clearly defined subject positions. This clarity is in itself an illustration of the deep sedimentation of the logic in the practices and institutions of ‘international relations’; the following lines appear so self-evident that they read more as a high-school level introduction to IR. State sovereignty posits the *state* as the key subject of global politics, one that is the locus of agency and legitimacy. The state is defined and constituted by its *people* and/or *nation*, depending on cultural and linguistic contexts. The *government* and particular *policy-makers* are then supposed to represent the state and the people; that is act on their behalf, especially when it comes to defining and furthering shared ‘national’ interests. The logic of the government’s action is thus inside-out, as foreign policy is supposed to serve as a transmission belt between the domestically formed interests and the international environment. Central principles provided by this logic are equality among states, independence in their decision making and mutual recognition thereof. The key signifiers are ‘sovereignty’ and nationally defined ‘interest’.

This logic is deeply embedded in Germany’s constitutional order, which defines the institutions and rules of the political process and makes it possible for a politician to speak on behalf of the people and represent the state abroad. The configuration of the political sphere according to the particularly German articulation of this principle was manifest in the way key decisions with respect to Iraq were made and presented. Gerhard Schröder repeatedly announced his policies in election campaign events directed at the domestic public. He did so without consultations with international partners, further highlighting the primacy of the sovereign German community. This also shows the discursive positioning of the chancellor as the *decision-maker*; that is someone situated in a unique way that allowed him/her to perform a particular practice, e.g. announce a policy. He was *enabled* to do so by the constellation of Germany’s political space, which equips the subject position of the chancellor with the power to “determine and be responsible for the general guidelines of policy” (Basic Law: §65) within the cabinet. At the same time, however, the chancellor was also *limited* by the German version of state sovereignty, since it gives the parliament much stronger control over foreign policy than in most countries. Therefore, the policies were also shaped by the sceptical attitude of the red-green parliamentarians, which would have made obtaining the Bundestag’s approval for military engagement in Iraq very difficult. In this sense, policy was thus constructed very much inside-out and according to domestic rules.

While it is the sedimentation and institutionalisation of principles and rules associated with state sovereignty that matters most, the reproduction of the logic was discernible also on the level of language. Speeches, debates and newspaper interviews of leading policy-makers are characteristic in their regular invocation of certain tropes and signifiers, which are posited as broader principles that are merely expressed in concrete policies. This includes explicit references to ‘sovereignty’, for example in the words of SPD’s long-time foreign policy speaker and now a senior diplomat Karstein Voigt that “our country is sovereign” (Voigt 2002a). Giving a key announcement on the government’s policy to the Bundestag on 13 February 2003, Schröder also reconfirmed the ostensibly obvious in saying that “we will have to make these decision sovereignly” (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d: 1875). At other times, the chosen signifiers would highlight Germany’s equality to other nations, referring to the country as ‘self-confident’ (Schröder in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d,e), ‘mature’ (Voigt 2002a) and ‘grown up’ (Schröder 2002e). In Fischer’s words, the Germans were ‘no satellites’ (Fischer 2002a). Unsurprisingly, key members of the government also did not shy away from the talk of ‘Germany’s interests’ (Schröder in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d; Struck 2002a), which could naturally differ from those of other countries.

The logic of state sovereignty and the principles of independence and mutual recognition legitimised Germany’s dissent with some of her key international partners, since sovereign states are indeed entitled to a different opinion. However, and this illustrates the depoliticising effect of social logics that obscures the contingent and political nature of all decisions, such ‘right’ may even turn to an ‘obligation’ or a ‘duty’. As the defence minister Struck argued, “[t]he chancellor was absolutely obliged to define an own German position” (Struck 2003a: 21).<sup>34</sup> The notion of duty was formulated above all with respect to the German people, but since Germany was an equal, ‘self-confident’ nation speaking to others ‘at eye’s level’ (Ludger Volmer in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002f: 936), it was extended also to the international arena. In an interview in the middle of the 2002 election campaign, Schröder spoke about “the right, maybe even the duty, in certain situations to say very clearly what we think. Partnership with the United States, friendship does not mean subordination.” (Schröder 2002d) Therefore, Germany, just like any other state was entitled to be treated with sufficient respect, e.g. when her opinion was sought: “consultation cannot mean that I get a phone call two hours in advance only to be told, ‘We’re going in.’ Consultation among grown-up nations has to mean not just consultation about the how and the when, but also about the whether.” (Schröder 2002e) In this respect, Germany’s

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<sup>34</sup> Another prominent signifier used to this purpose was ‘responsibility’, which also plays prominent role in two leading critical accounts of Germany’s foreign policy (Zehfuss 2002, Hellmann, Weber, and Sauer 2008).

sovereignty made it imperative to stay firm and oppose even the closest allies should her own interest be different.

While notions connected to state sovereignty are often used to explain the government's position on Iraq, especially in discourses coloured by the normalisation thesis, this social logic was equally prominent also in the language of the opposition. The principles and the key signifiers associated with state sovereignty were uncontested. Regardless of the different opinion in the Iraq crisis, there was a broad agreement that Germany was fully entitled to act as an independent and equal state in relation to other nations. "We are free alliance partners and not underage underlings," maintained the CDU's foreign policy speaker and a prominent Atlanticist voice Friedbert Pflüger (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002a: 21784). The right of the government to formulate an independent policy was beyond doubt, since, as Angela Merkel put it, "German foreign policy is done in Berlin." (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003e: 2502) Common was also the appeal to 'interests', which was even presented as a core imperative: "German foreign policy should focus on German interests," Merkel further argued (*ibid.*). The entitlement of the government to act on behalf of the population was thus out of the question, what was challenged was merely the particular way this should be done *within* the undisputed and widely sedimented rules of state sovereignty.

#### **b) Logic of peaceful resolution**

The logic of peaceful resolution is the second principle constitutive of German foreign policy. It is defined by the rules it posits, which delegitimise war, effectively exclude it as an acceptable policy instrument and insist on non-violent means of conflict resolution. This logic is a binary one, operating around the hierarchical dichotomy between the deviation of war and the desirable normality of peace. Unlike state sovereignty, it gives no particular guidance regarding who the subjects of international politics are. The 'subject of peaceful resolution' is thus extremely ambiguous, since it is constituted only in relation to the norm which it is supposed to represent. 'Peaceful' subject positions therefore take the form of states, international organisations or even individuals, whose legitimacy and endowment with agency is measured by the extent to which it contributes to the preservation and advancement of peace. 'Peace' and 'war' are also the key signifiers provided by the logic.

In Germany, commitment to 'peace' has been a central aspect of post-war political identities, which have been constructed in a sharp break with the past, as shown also in the literature discussed in Chapter 2. While the logic of peaceful resolution is certainly valid also for other states as one of the constitutive principles of the UN-based international order, in Germany's 'culture of antimilitarism' (Berger 1998) it is particularly strong. According to a discursive study of parliamentary debates in 1986-2002, 'peace' has been presented as the 'ideal state',

a ‘benchmark’ for evaluating policies, and an ‘undisputed political value’ (Hellmann, Weber, and Sauer 2008: 56). The binary structure of war/peace is institutionalised in the Basic Law, which puts the “determination to promote world peace” in the Preamble and makes unconstitutional and punishable any “[a]cts tending to and undertaken with intent to disturb the peaceful relations between nations, especially to prepare for a war of aggression” (Basic Law: §26). The commitment to peace is further reproduced in a number of institutional and legal arrangements, making the use of military force rather complicated (especially the necessity of a prior parliamentary approval for deploying troops abroad).

With respect to Iraq, the official language was very rich in references to peace, naturalising it as a matter of course and positioning the government as acting on behalf of it. As Schröder explained in one of his most important policy statements to the Bundestag, “the policy of the Federal Government is a peace policy [...] The most prominent task of international politics is to prevent wars.” (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002d: 1876) Elsewhere he argued that contributing to ‘peace in the world’ also “corresponds to the basic values, to which we feel obliged” (Schröder 2003c: 12). Clearly, the depoliticising notion of ‘duty’ thus emerged also in this context, another example of which are Fischer’s words in the Bundestag that “[w]e are obliged by the Basic Law to do everything to avoid war.” (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002d: 1885) The imperative of avoiding war also guided the diplomatic practice. I have shown earlier that the government, together with France and Russia, actively promoted different ways to deal with Iraq, especially inspections and sanctions. In Fischer’s own narrative, it was paramount to stay with ‘peaceful’, ‘non-military’ or ‘civilian’ means (Fischer 2003f,g), that is “all means at our disposal for a peaceful settlement of the Iraq crisis” (Fischer 2003c: 5).

The commitment to peace as the guiding foreign policy principle was shared also by opposition of all colours. Only one day before the war started, Merkel stated in the Bundestag that “[w]ar is never the continuation of politics with normal means. War can never be that.” (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003f: 2733) Once again, preserving and promoting ‘peace’ constitutes an ‘obligation’. This was argued for instance by the CDU/CSU’s chancellor candidate Edmund Stoiber: “Precisely on the basis of our bitter historical experience is the obligation to peace the foundation of the policy of the CDU and the CSU.” (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002b: 25575) Angela Merkel revisited the ‘war’ side of the binary, again in the depoliticising notion of obligation: “To avoid war is the proper desire. Politics is obliged to it.” (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d: 1880) The opposition repeated many times that “[n]o one in this country wants war” (Stoiber in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002b, Merkel in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002c, *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003c), that the preferred option was a ‘peaceful disarmament’ of Iraq (Merkel 2003a), and that Europe must choose ‘a common



way of securing peace' (Stoiber in Deutscher Bundestag 2002b: 25576). The hierarchical binary of 'war' and 'peace' thus played an equally important part in the discourses of the government and the opposition. There were certainly differences in what promoting 'peace' meant, which I will revisit later. However, it was unchallenged as a key signifier constitutive of Germany's subject positions and policies.

### **c) Logic of international communities**

The third social logic is that of *international communities*, which constructs subject positions broader than the state, yet also more specific than those of peaceful resolution. Typical candidates are the West, the European Union or the transatlantic community. Crucially, these are subjects in their own right, not merely arenas or aggregations of sovereign states. The web of relations between subject positions is then much more complicated than in the case of state sovereignty. *States* certainly play a role, but their agency and legitimacy is defined also in relation to broader communities and their principles; this logic works outside-in. The position of the *government* and individual *policy-makers* is ambiguous, as they are expected to act on behalf of broader entities, whose 'inside' and 'outside' is often unclear, especially when it comes to the largely overlapping notions of the West, Europe or NATO. Just like with peaceful resolution, it is often ambiguous what the articulated 'we' actually relates to. The rules provided by this logic are the commitment to a common evaluation of problems and decision-making based on shared interests, values and principles. There are a number of key signifiers, including 'multilateralism', 'Europe', 'alliance' and 'solidarity'.

The operation of the logic was discernible both in linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of practices. First, it was present in the affirmation of international law, whose primacy is, unconventionally, institutionalised already in the Basic Law: "The general rules of international law shall be an integral part of federal law. They shall take precedence over the laws and directly create rights and duties for the inhabitants of the federal territory." (Basic Law: §25) International law was an important trope also in the official rhetoric, as illustrated in Schröder's commitment "to put the force of law instead of the law of the forceful" (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1876). Second, the logic was present in the recurring emphasis given to international institutions. Most politicians were content to repeat their commitment to multilateralism as the central principle of international relations, which was translated also in the support of the United Nations as the "the most important forum for global regulation" (Fischer 2002j: 5, similarly also Fischer 2003d: 3, Memorandum von Deutschland, Frankreich und der Russischen Föderation 2003: 25).

Two other international institutions were significant, since they were both reproduced as subjects with their own agency as well as crucial coordinates for Germany's policies. First

was the European Union, which played an important part even when it appeared divided and paralysed. The German government offered a number of responses to the EU's split, all of which shared the importance of the EU, the desirability of a common position and Germany's commitment to both. The performance of the EU may not have been fully satisfactory, yet it appeared to be united in at least some aspects and thus could be articulated as a subject of its own. Fischer explained that "[o]verall, the Europeans want that the inspectors receive the time they need, and are allowed to advance in their work." (Fischer 2003b) There was a "common European position," he argued elsewhere, namely that "first, the way must lead to the Security Council, and second, the inspectors have to be admitted [into Iraq] again" (Fischer 2003a). Even in their disagreement on the military option, the EU states, with Germany playing a key role, made significant efforts to hold at least some sort of a community line. This was apparent in a number of diplomatic practices, which peaked in the organisation of the extraordinary meeting of the European Council on Iraq on 17 February 2003 and the successful efforts at presenting a joint declaration.

The other crucial institution was NATO as the embodiment of transatlantic relations. "We have to remain together in NATO," Fischer insisted (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d: 1887). The point of reference was very often extended from NATO as an organisation to the more ambiguous notions of 'alliance' or 'transatlantic community'. NATO was indeed important, but rather as an expression of this deeper bond. The crucial importance of the alliance for Germany was referred to repeatedly, most often with the help of the 'pillar' and 'cornerstone' metaphors. Fischer maintained that "[t]he transatlantic alliance is the cornerstone of our stability and security, globally and also in Europe." (Fischer 2003e: 23) Logically, membership in such community brings consequences, which were, again, articulated in the depoliticising notion of 'duty' that ostensibly limited the degree of agency in making a decision. One day before Iraq was attacked, Schröder explained Germany's assistance to the war effort by saying that "[t]o this alliance, to NATO, belong rights and obligations. These obligations, which result from the NATO Treaty and the different Status of Forces Agreements, we will now take into account" (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003f: 2728). The discourse of the government thus constructed Germany's 'indirect support' in terms of the unavoidable fulfilment of duties derived from her participation in a broader community. Belonging to this broader community was even considered the only possible option. As Fischer put it, there was "no alternative to transatlantism." (Fischer 2003e: 22).

The logic of international communities was even more important in the discourse of the opposition. Internationalist tropes and arguments were listed as constituting the 'pillars', 'imperatives' or 'basis' of German foreign policy and naturalised through references to post-war traditions of the Federal Republic. "To be part of the world community is a pillar of our

security policy,” Friedbert Pflüger of the CDU argued in the Bundestag (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002c: 118). According to the FDP’s foreign policy expert Werner Hoyer, there were “a few constants of German foreign policy of the last 50 years with which we have fared well and which no government has questioned yet”, with “strong engagement for multilateralism” being an important one (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002c: 110). This general commitment was then developed in praising the importance of international organisations, especially the EU and “systems of cooperative security like the UN and OSCE, as well as [...] systems of collective defence like NATO.” (ibid.) This internationalist and multilateral ‘basis’ of Berlin’s foreign policy was summarised by a leading voice from the CDU as “never alone, no German special path, no going it alone, but to be tightly involved in the ever closer integrating Europe, with this united Europe to play a stronger role also in the Atlantic alliance, and [...] to make sure that the United Nations [are] a stronger ordering power in this world” (Wolfgang Schäuble in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002b: 25622). Therefore, just like state sovereignty and peaceful resolution, the logic of international communities was a key structuring principle of the discourses of both the government and the opposition.

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The simultaneous presence of the three different social logics within the discourse offers the first step towards explaining Berlin’s inconsistent policies in the Iraq crisis. Germany’s politicians were simultaneously relying on different rules and speaking from different subject positions, which provided them with contradictory impulses. While the logic of state sovereignty is relatively unproblematic here, the other two appeared in a direct contradiction, providing the Germans with a dilemma between the aversion to ‘war’ on the one hand, and the commitment to the ‘allies’, some of whom were pushing for the military option, and multilateral institutions, which could have failed to block it, on the other hand. German subjectivities were thus split between these different logics, which were difficult to reconcile, but perhaps even more difficult to abandon. The next steps in our analysis thus have to examine the way this tension was made sense of within discourse, which I will discuss in part in the third section of this chapter and in part in Chapter 8, and why it was not possible to reconcile it by choosing some positions and abandoning others (Chapter 9). Before that, however, I have to bring more arguments to clarify the status of the three social logics.

### **Before and beyond Iraq: Social logics as long-term patterns**

I have defined social logics as sedimented and taken for granted. However, my arguments have so far been demonstrated only on a study stretching a little more than a year. To show

that the three logics are lasting patterns and not singular occurrences, I will now focus on their sedimentation before and beyond Iraq. The best way of providing evidence would be to conduct comprehensive genealogies or extensive diachronic comparisons, for which there is no place here. Instead, I offer at least three micro-studies. First, I incorporate practitioners' own reflections on the Iraq crisis that were gathered years later from memoirs and interviews. Second, I use the Libya crisis of 2011 as a 'test case'. Third, I reach back to the literature on German foreign policy. Each of these moves poses certain problems, but the combination of all three offsets them and provides some evidence for the persistence of the three social logics.

First, the durability of social logics can be assessed from politicians' retrospective reflections in memoirs and interviews. The issue here is temporality: do these materials reflect the discourses from the time of the crises, or rather at the time of writing/speaking? The latter has to be taken as a starting point, but the situation is actually much more complex. Memoirs often quote speeches and other documents from the time they reflect upon, sometimes at great length, and are based also on hidden archival materials such as journals. Similarly, interviewees also refer to their previous statements or reiterate earlier positions. Localising a point in time from which these discourses speak is therefore extremely difficult and ambiguous. However, since the analysis of social logics focuses on recurring trends, this should not necessarily pose a problem. If social logics are unchallenged and taken for granted in memoirs and interviews, it tells us something about their sedimentation and long-term force, without having to pin them down to an exact point on the timeline.

Traces of the logic of state sovereignty can be found both in memoirs and in interviews, already in the way politicians like to present themselves: as decision-*makers* taking tough choices on behalf of the German people and defending them internationally. On the level of rhetoric, sovereignty was mobilised above all when discussing the relationship to the United States and other countries. According to Ludger Volmer, while the Germans were grateful to the USA, they were also 'no vassals' (2013: 155). A parliamentarian from the SPD, whom I interviewed, argued in a similar fashion: "We have our own interests, we have our own goals and we also decide ourselves as Germany in which direction we support our partners in NATO." Schröder himself posed foreign policy 'independence' as an axiom (articulating it at the same time with the 'European' element of the logics of international communities): "Is our foreign policy subdued to the American, or is it more? I had an unequivocal answer to that, not in the sense of an insulated national position, but always with regard to Germany's European mission." (Schröder 2007: 247)

The role of peaceful resolution is similarly prominent. The strongest articulations were probably Schröder's, who made the catchphrase 'courage to peace' into a signature slogan for his memoir and his official website. Peace structured also the articulations of the leading Greens, for whom "preventing war" and "when this does not succeed, at least keeping Germany out of it" (Volmer 2013: 154), or "further campaigning with all force for the prevention of a war against Iraq" (Fischer 2011: 174) were some of the principal objectives of Germany's policy. This was not restricted to the government. Even some of the outspoken critics of the government from the CDU whom I interviewed argued in their interviews that the party had hoped that 'war' could have been avoided.

Just like in parliamentary debates, it was the logic of international communities that was articulated most often. The remaining objectives from Volmer's and Fischer's lists were presented in terms of not isolating Germany in her rejection of war (Volmer 2013: 154) and 'repairing' the German-US relationship (Fischer 2011: 174). The idea of "being isolated from many of our allies" was causing "a queasy feeling" to the government also according to the defence minister Struck (2010: 98). Politicians from the opposition used similar tropes both in their criticisms of the government and in the alternatives they presented. The problem for them was that Germany endangered the transatlantic alliance and abandoned the tradition of mediating between her European and American allies. When asked what the CDU would have done differently, a party member said to me that they would have strived for a common European position as an alternative to military intervention. The analysis of memoirs and interviews thus suggests that this logic, just like state sovereignty and peaceful resolution, remains unchallenged even in recollections gathered years after Iraq.

Second, the sway of the three logics over Germany's foreign policy can be examined by 'testing' them on the Libya crisis, in which the Federal Republic found herself in a similarly awkward position. Berlin loudly opposed the Gaddafi regime and played a leading part in imposing sanctions against it. Yet, on the (highly dubious and contested) grounds that this would lead to the Bundeswehr's direct engagement in Africa, the Germans abstained in the UNSC vote on the resolution that imposed the 'no-fly-zone'. At the same time, Germany supported its implementation indirectly by increasing her role in Afghanistan, so that resources of other NATO countries could be redeployed to Libya (for a detailed account see Brockmeier 2013). Importantly, this time it was the CDU/CSU and FDP who formed the government, whereas the SPD, the Greens and the PDS's successor *Die Linke* were in opposition. Divisions over the Libya policy, however, cut across party lines. The status of a 'test case', by which I mean that I am asking *whether* the three logics were present, not *what* logics there were, and the space available in this dissertation do not justify a detailed study. Instead, I am offering a reading of five key texts: foreign minister Guido Westerwelle's

(FDP) article in the *SZ* from 24 March 2011, his crucial parliamentary speeches from 16 and 18 March and the two critical responses delivered by the SPD's leading parliamentarian Rolf Mützenich.

State sovereignty was utilised by the foreign minister to articulate a policy that differed from those of Germany's allies. Solidarity was important, Westerwelle (2011) argued, but it "could not remove from any member state the individual decision about the deployment of its own troops. Such a decision cannot be made only because others made it too." No matter how solidary Germany was, decisions were clearly a sovereign matter based on domestic rules and national interests. The importance of independent national decision-making was fully supported by Mützenich, for whom the deployment of troops was also "to be decided in [the framework of] national sovereignty" (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2011b: 11140). What Mützenich disputed with the help of references to sovereignty was Westerwelle's presentation of the deployment of Germany's troops as unavoidable if Germany had agreed with the UNSC resolution: "I believe that the question of national sovereignty is not derived from how one possibly decides [...] in the Security Council" (ibid.: 11141).

Clearly discernible were also the principles of peaceful resolution. Westerwelle argued that the government saw the 'military attack' in Libya 'with great scepticism' and, therefore, "[w]e do not want and cannot become a war party in a civil war in North Africa" (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2011a: 10815). In their policies, the government articulated a line between non-military means (sanctions, prosecution of Gaddafi under international law), which it supported, and the military effort, from which it refrained. In other words, Germany was ready to face the Gaddafi regime diplomatically, but not prepared to engage in a 'war'. In the undesirability of war, there was little disagreement on Mützenich's behalf, since dealing with Libya in a 'civilian and peaceful' way was the 'top priority' also for him (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2011a: 10819): "Now you say: We do not want to go there with German ground troops. No, of course not. We do not want that either." (Mützenich in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2011b: 11141)

With respect to the logic of international communities, the case against the government was constructed around it, criticising Germany's departure from the course taken by her core EU and NATO allies. Before the UNSC vote, for Mützenich it was important "especially that the international community remains united" (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2011a: 10819). Speaking right after the vote, he further lamented that "[o]ur problem, the problem of Germany, now is, that there is no common European position any longer." (Mützenich in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2011b: 11141) Westerwelle's response combined the denial of the mismatch between the policy and Germany's internationalist commitments with an emphatic

affirmation of the latter. “Germany did not isolate herself. [...] From the EU, the majority of the member states will not participate in the military operation.” (Westerwelle 2011) With respect to NATO, no doubt was to be had regarding Berlin’s dedication: “We take alliance solidarity very seriously. We know what we owe to NATO.” (ibid.) For Westerwelle, Germany was indeed exercising her ‘international responsibility’, but she did so elsewhere and otherwise, for instance by having 7 000 soldiers posted around the world (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2011b: 11139). Therefore, Westerwelle’s and Mützenich’s arguments suggest that same three social logics shaped Germany’s foreign policy also in 2011.

The third and final way of assessing the temporal reach of the social logics is by situating them against the background of the literature on German foreign policy. The question through which the literature is read is whether some of the conclusions could be reinterpreted in terms of social logics. With respect to the logic of state sovereignty, my arguments seem to fit well with those of the proponents of the normalisation thesis, who suggest that Germany has become a self-interested and assertive ‘normal’ power (Wagener 2006, Crawford 2007, Dettke 2009, Hellmann 2011). Therefore, it can be said that this literature backs my argument about the durability of the social logic of state sovereignty before and beyond Iraq. Nevertheless, certain qualifications need to be made. The normalisation thesis offers only a particular version of the broader logic of state sovereignty, highlighting its unilateral and conflictual dimensions. In my account, the logic does not say much about the content of a state’s policies; it merely defines the primacy of the state as a subject and the key principles as independence and equality. In this respect, the logic is actually undisputed also in the civilian power literature, since there is no account that would deny the capability or legitimacy of German politicians to practice foreign policy ‘inside out’ and on behalf of the nation/people.

The other two logics seem to be very much in line with the patterns identified in the civilian power literature, to which the imperatives of preserving peace and embedding Germany within the international community are central. To name just a few of the contributions to this tradition, for Duffield (1999: 780-2), it is antimilitarism and multilateralism that form the two axes of Germany’s foreign policy culture. For Longhurst, reluctance to the use of force in international relations, redundancy of militarism and exhaustion of statism and nationalism are some of the ‘foundational elements’ of Germany’s strategic culture (2004: 46). For Risse (2007) the core principles of German foreign policy identity are civilian power, multilateralism and orientation on Europe. While most of the civilian power literature relates to the 1990s and thus can be utilised above all to suggest that the two social logics were valid prior to the Iraq crisis, some authors argue for its ongoing importance also post-

Iraq (Maull 2003a, 2006, 2015, Risse 2004, 2007, Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, Wolff 2013).

Evidence for the argument that the three social logics have played a role in German foreign policy before and beyond Iraq can thus be found also in the literature. Onto-epistemological disagreements aside, does this actually mean that most of the mainstream literature is correct in some respect, even though there are profound disagreements within it? I believe that each of the two basic positions can show us an important *part* of the picture. The fact that there has been enough evidence to support contradictory arguments suggests that different governing principles may have been present in German foreign policy for some time. Bach (1999) argues that intervention debates in the 1990s were characterised by complex tensions and interactions between the ‘liberal’ and ‘normalcy’ discourses; a conclusion that I would extend also to Iraq and beyond. The key difference between the mainstream accounts and mine thus lies in my focus on the multiplicity of potentially incompatible logics that constitutes Germany’s subject positions and shapes her policies. While the central debate in the mainstream scholarship has been whether the Federal Republic is more of a civilian or rather a normal power, I suggest that Germany’s identities are constituted in a perpetual tension and oscillation between both. The central problem is thus not a linear prevalence of one particular logic, but the politics of articulating policies from within these tensions, which I will now start to examine.

### **From logics to policy: Hegemony as a state of affairs and the politics of articulation**

Social logics do not stand for competing positions or discursive coalitions. Social logics are threads from which the discourse is woven together and they are constitutive also of the very subject positions from which foreign policy is enacted. The three social logics cut across different responses to the questions of whether and how Germany should have participated in the war in Iraq and I have indeed used even the very same speeches as examples of different logics. What is then the relation of the three logics – are they competing principles, elements of a broader logic or some combination of both? What is the relation between logics and policy? These two questions concern the politics of social logics and the power relations present in hegemony as a state of affairs. In this section, I will first answer the former question by capturing the hegemonic constellation of German foreign policy in terms of a particular articulation of the three social logics and look at the ways how their potential incompatibilities were dealt with in the discourse. Second, I will revisit the relations between logics and policy to show how the former shape the latter. In a third move, I will further demonstrate the power effects of social logics by discussing how challengers to the status



quo were disciplined and marginalised. The following discussion thus extends the insights from the previous section to a more explicit discussion of the construction of foreign policy.

First, regarding the relations between the social logics, for most German politicians the three sets of principles would be merely different parts of single logic of foreign policy. As I have shown, all the three logics were reproduced both by the government and the opposition. German politicians would be hard-pressed to choose one over another. Not only that each of them was hegemonic in the static sense – that is relatively uncontested and generally drawn upon in the discourse – in itself, but Germany's hegemonic order was constituted by *all the three logics together*. The three logics appear to work together well in most everyday international practices, which are simultaneously performed by sovereign states, peacefully and within international communities. However, this 'reality' of routinised practices is constantly being disrupted by the *real* (in the Lacanian sense) of war, exploitation or genocide. These dislocations highlight the potential incompatibilities of social logics, as illustrated by the German dilemmas between 'alliance loyalty' to the United States and the commitment to 'peace' in the Iraq crisis. Dislocatory events open space for the politics of the articulation. In a situation where all the different logics are sedimented and broadly cherished, this politics is above all about weaving the logics back together and claiming one's policies as performed in accord with all of them simultaneously. The hegemonic status quo is being reproduced and politicians use it to their own advantage, depoliticising their contingent decisions by presenting them as mere instantiations of the broadly shared principles that constitute the hegemonic 'common sense'. To be able to do so, politicians also need to respond to the tensions within this hegemonic constellation and explain the apparent inconsistencies in their practices, like the contradiction of opposing a war and making it possible at the same time.

For the government, the central challenge was posed by the logic of international communities, since Germany's policies deviated from some of Berlin's key partners. (The other two logics, in contrast, were easily commensurable in the 'sovereign' decision to pursue 'peace'.) The logics of international communities and peaceful resolution were linked in the commitment to multilateral diplomacy, since these means were both 'internationalist' and 'peaceful'. As long as peaceful means were also seen as efficient, there was no dilemma at all. "I do not want to accept that it is only about waging war with friends or giving peace a chance without them. We can disarm Iraq without war," Schröder argued (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d: 1879), linking the two logics as compatible. Therefore, as Schröder further put it in the same speech, Germany could be simultaneously 'responsible for peace' in objecting to military operations, while also being up to fulfilling her 'alliance duty in NATO' by assisting the US Army. The two logics were thus linked above all through a

denial of their potential incompatibilities. With respect to articulating the logics of international communities and state sovereignty, the strategy was rather to accommodate both simultaneously through the metaphor of ‘balance’: “We have to exert careful balance between alliance obligations, which we fulfil and must fulfil in the interest of the alliance, in the interest of our friends, and our principled position.” (Schröder 2003a) Germany was thus simultaneously retaining her sovereign ‘principled position’ by opposing the war and trying to prevent it, while sticking to her ‘alliance obligations’ by helping the war effort. As these articulations demonstrate, the government presented its policies as enacted from within the existing hegemonic constellation of the three social logics, as part and parcel of the existing ‘principles’ or ‘traditions’.

The opposition was at less pain to hold different logics together, since, for the most part, it could get away with criticising the government and remaining ambiguous with respect to alternative policy solutions without being pressed too hard to justify its own inconsistencies. However, there were still certain efforts at doing so. The logic of international communities was tightly linked to the logic of state sovereignty, so that the two became almost indivisible. By being a reliable ally and a member of international organisations, Merkel and other CDU members argued, Germany was serving her own national interests. ‘European integration’, ‘rejection of special paths of all sorts’ and ‘reliable transatlantic partnership’ were the very ‘raison d’être of democratic Germany’ and ‘absolutely in the German interest’ (Merkel 2003a; Deutscher Bundestag 2003c). For the opposition, there was no dilemma between the national interest and alliance loyalties, since the former was conditioned by the latter. The key challenge was then how to articulate this position also in terms of peaceful resolution. In this respect, Merkel and the CDU’s official documents still insisted on the necessity of exhausting all diplomatic means. The military option was admitted only as the ‘very last resort’ (Deutscher Bundestag 2003c), only “when [...] the peaceful disarmament fails” (Merkel 2003a: 15). The hierarchical binary between war and peace was therefore very much kept in place also in the CDU’s discourse, but the importance of peace was directed towards the future: “Peace is a paramount value. But one can by no means exchange the secure peace of the future for the illusory peace of the day.” (ibid.) Even the CDU’s support of the military intervention was thus articulated as in line with the same rules and traditions, that is from within the hegemonic constellation of the three social logics.

However, to the second problem, if it is possible to argue and implement radically different policies from within the same set of social logics, what exactly is the nature of the relationship between logics and policy? Policies are not caused, but merely made possible by social logics. This is a non-deterministic process, which combines both parts of what Diez (2014) calls *enabling* and *delimiting* roles of discourse. The analysis here concentrates on the

‘regulated’ in Laclau’s notion of decision as a ‘regulated madness’ (Laclau 1996a: 57). Social logics *enable* policies by providing the subject positions from which they can be performed and by offering the signifiers to articulate them. This is also *limiting* at the same time, since the sedimentation of particular logics makes it virtually necessary to perform certain practices (e.g. diplomatic negotiations prior to military actions) and use certain signifiers (war, peace, alliance, sovereignty, isolation etc.).<sup>35</sup> These practices and signifiers are already ordered by the pre-existing structuring of the discourse, so that diplomatic negotiations are preferable to military actions and ‘peace’ is preferable to ‘war’. Social logics thus exercise power by providing a horizon of possibility and structuring the practices through which decisions will be reached and enacted. The hegemony of the three social logics within the German foreign policy discourse meant that it was almost impossible to formulate policies as being against or outside these logics.

Moving to the disciplining aspects of hegemony, this does not mean that every single parliamentarian would identify with this basic consensus. Nevertheless, the power effects of social logics are discernible also in the way how these outliers are deprived of voice or pushed to the margins. Such policing was practiced above all against two groups that were at odds with key aspects of the logic of international communities. First was the national-conservative fringe group of the CDU/CSU, which articulated its positions around the logic of state sovereignty and was notably sceptical of internationalist commitments. The most prominent representative of this argument was the CSU’s parliamentarian Peter Gauweiler. Presenting himself as a maverick, Gauweiler departed from the party line by regularly voting against foreign deployments of the Bundeswehr. He not only opposed the whip on Iraq and was one of the only two CDU/CSU politicians that voted against the official declaration proposed by the faction (Deutscher Bundestag 2003c), but even went well beyond the line of the red-green government vis-à-vis the United States. Gauweiler visited Baghdad as late as in March 2003 and called for the prosecution of the US government under international law after the attacks. In consequence, he was marginalised within the parliamentary party and did not speak on the matter of Iraq in the Bundestag at all during the timeframe of my study.

The second, much broader group, is on the left end of the spectrum, above all in the PDS (succeeded by *Die Linke* in 2007) and to a lesser extent within the Greens. Articulating their position around the logic of peaceful resolution, they differed from the hegemonic ‘common sense’ by rejecting not only foreign missions of the Bundeswehr, but also NATO in principle. Regarding Iraq, this group went well beyond the cautious scepticism of the government and reached out also to strongly anti-American, anti-imperialist, and pacifist

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<sup>35</sup> By ‘necessary’ I mean *socially* necessary, that is as a condition to make a reasonable, intelligible and potentially acceptable case.

arguments. The PDS even initiated a constitutional prosecution of the chancellor for his alleged assistance in the preparation of a war of aggression. Admittedly, Iraq is not the best case study to demonstrate the discursive policing of this group. The PDS was represented only by two directly elected members in the Bundestag, who were marginalised already through parliamentary rules, since they could not meet the conditions to form a faction. The left wing of the Greens by and large muted its criticism, since the government policy was accepted with some relief after the involvements in Kosovo and Afghanistan. However, in the longer term, policing occurred also here, above all through the coalition politics of the Social Democrats, which blocked the access of these voices to the executive. SPD rejected to form a coalition with the PDS/*Die Linke* at the national level, citing foreign policy differences as a major reason. In the Green party, radical politicians were disciplined by the 'realist' wing of the party, which posed being part of the foreign policy consensus as a condition for the party's ability to enter the government.

As the two examples show, departing from the hegemony of the three social logics is thus certainly possible, but probably only at the price of being marginalised.

## **Conclusion**

Focusing on the repetitive and stable elements in practices and discourses, I have argued that German foreign policy in the Iraq crisis was made possible by the social logics of state sovereignty, peaceful resolution and international communities. The combination of the three logics was deeply sedimented, so that policies had to be articulated as based on the three logics, while those who would challenge this were marginalised. The three logics co-existed in a joint hegemony. Therefore, inconsistencies in Germany's policies can be partially explained already at the level of social logics, as resulting from the struggles to hold identifications with different subject positions together. Most of the time, however, these contradictions were obscured in the discourse. In fact, the three logics were articulated as different yet compatible aspects of a single logic of German foreign policy. While this hegemonic order was constantly being dislocated, what followed were largely conservative attempts to reinstate the status quo. At this level, the politics of articulation is thus about providing solutions to the dislocation of the hegemonic order by reconnecting the three logics and presenting one's own policies as a mere application of broadly shared principles.

I have further argued that the three social logics are general patterns in Germany's foreign policies that are present before and beyond Iraq. To support this argument, I have offered three micro-studies, which were based on retrospective reflections of German politicians on the Iraq crisis, key texts from the Libya crisis of 2011 and the scholarly literature on

Germany's foreign policy. All of them illustrate that the three social logics have been structuring Berlin's policies over a considerable period of time. However, I have also suggested that the same social logics are valid also beyond Germany. This chapter has provided no direct evidence for such a claim. However, it has indirectly supported this hypothesis (as I have been reluctant to call it a 'foreign policy theory' for reasons explained in Chapter 4) by showing how exactly the three logics are articulated in a particular context, thereby providing empirical patterns for a comparison based on family resemblances with other cases. While this is no place to pursue this line of inquiry, I believe that the politics of military interventions in the post-Iraq era offers a number of examples of the complex intertwining of the different logics, for instance in the Obama administration's 'internationalist' insistence on broad coalitions and its 'peaceful' determination to avoid getting involved in 'another war' with respect to Libya, Syria and Iraq.

Arguably, these conclusions are rather similar to those of IR constructivism or the 'practice turn'. I have even explicitly engaged with the mainstream literature on German foreign policy and argued that the 'civilian power' and 'normalisation' theses help us illuminate the functioning of Germany's policies, provided the two are treated as conflicting yet simultaneously present social logics. Does this not make me vulnerable to the criticism raised from the discourse-theoretical perspectives of pragmatism (Hellmann 2009) and poststructuralism (Zehfuss 2002, Nonhoff and Stengel 2014)? Is not the application of a rule or the meaning of a signifier like 'interest', 'peace' or 'alliance' ultimately unstable, contingent and political, which would make it very difficult to exhaust or explain a practice? Both objections would have to be answered in the affirmative – provided my analysis stopped here and satisfied itself with the account of social logics. This is not what I am doing. Regularities are important, because they show us the role of the hegemonic 'common sense', but they also have to be complemented by the analysis of how such 'common sense' is reproduced and challenged (political logics) and of the affective investment that holds it together (fantasmatic logics). Two additional chapters must be written.

## 8 | Political logics and the meaning of ‘crisis’

### Discursive struggles over foreign policy

The discussion of social logics has helped us understand the core rules, principles and subject positions that are hegemonic (in the static sense) in the German discourse. However, it also confronted us with a problem. If there was a broadly shared ‘common sense’, how come that responses to the Iraq crisis were so contested and inconsistent? To address this issue, we need to move away from the repetitive patterns of social logics and appreciate also the element of instability and open-endedness of practices that results from their positioning within broader discursive contexts. Social logics shape foreign policy by providing basic resources for its articulation. However, they can never exhaust it, since there is always an excess of meaning to the signifiers and practices that are linked together, which leaves them open to contestation. This contestation happens *within* the order of the social logics, since the latter is never dislocated completely, but it is always also *about* the order, since new articulations always entail some modifications to it. In this chapter, I will discuss this dynamic aspect of hegemony, which lies in the politics of meaning construction and can be captured through the political logics of equivalence and difference. This will help me address the third item on the agenda of Chapter 4 and respond to the question of how foreign policy was articulated, reproduced and challenged. It will also allow me to argue that the contradictions of German foreign policy resulted not only from the different social logics, but also from the simultaneous articulation of different meanings of the ‘Iraq crisis’.

In theoretical terms, instability and indeterminacy are inevitable features of all discursive orders. The meaning of all discursive elements – signifiers, subject positions, practices or objects – is constituted in their relational articulations, which can always be altered. The meaning of a signifier (e.g. ‘peace’) or a signifying chain (e.g. the articulation of different elements in the ‘logic of peaceful resolution’) always depends on the broader context within which it is placed. As long as pure repetition is impossible, the context of the ‘Iraq crisis’ had to be somewhat different from other cases. Therefore the ‘application’ of social logics was always going to be a creative exercise imbued with power. The cracks that appear within the structure once it is dislocated open space for a degree of freedom and agency, or what I have called radical subjectivity. The undecidable character of the discursive structure becomes visible and social logics do not seem to provide sufficiently stable subject positions or policy guidance any more. Subjects thus need to actively construct the meaning of the situation by taking decisions, which are not only within the structure (of social logics), but also about the structure (Howarth 2000: 122). In the following pages, I look at the ways how

the ‘context’ of the ‘Iraq crisis’ was constructed within the three discursive arenas. These constructions take the form of political projects, which articulate the definition of the problem, offer particular policy decisions as solutions and thereby appropriate social logics and sustain or transform hegemonic orders.

The analysis starts from the dislocatory experiences that shake the hegemonic order of social logics and set political constructions in motion, since “[t]he world is less ‘given’ and must be increasingly constructed” (Laclau 1990: 40). In our case, this can be found in the efforts of the Bush administration to reshape global politics in the form of the infamous ‘War on Terror’. The new discourse presented a call, to which Germany had to respond. Not only because it addressed basic issues of international order, but also because it directly confronted Berlin with a series of demands, e.g. to reaffirm its commitment to the alliance with the US and to join the ‘War on Terror’. This discourse is well-known as it has been analysed by some of the best discursive studies of international politics (Jackson 2005, Croft 2006, Solomon 2015). Therefore, and also because US policies are not the subject of this dissertation, I will sketch its structure only in broad strokes.

Bush’s discourse presented a typical example of a project based on the operation of the logic of equivalence, which radically simplifies political space. Bush divided the world into two camps by a single boundary, governed by the hierarchical oppositions between ‘freedom’, ‘justice’, ‘civilisation’ and ‘progress’ on the one hand, and ‘terror’, ‘fear’, ‘evil’ and ‘destruction’ on the other hand. The United States were articulated as representative of the former, standing in contrariety to the “radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them” (Bush 2001). What was at stake was much more than a particular conflict between America and a couple of terrorists and governments; it was a universal struggle under which everything else could be subsumed. “This is the world’s fight. This is civilization’s fight.” (ibid.) All nations were asked to join, facing a clear-cut choice: “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” (ibid.) A shift in emphasis was discernible in the 2002 State of the Union Address, in which Bush repeated a similar set of binaries, yet expanded on the articulation of the enemy. Terrorists were now explicitly equivalent to “the world’s most dangerous regimes [that] threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons”, namely Iraq, Iran and North Korea. “States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil” (Bush 2002a). Of the three states, Iraq was given the strongest emphasis in the speech and soon became singled out as the most important enemy.

The German government – as well as large parts of the opposition and the public – managed to identify within the world according to the September 2001 version of the US discourse, responding with ‘unlimited solidarity’. However, the ‘axis of evil’ modification, which, in its

final consequence, made the support of a war in Iraq the condition of remaining with the US and against terrorism, was too much to accept for most policymakers in Berlin, let alone the German public. The binary choice between the US and the 'axis of evil' curtailed the options for exercising state sovereignty, while the unilateralist and warrior tones disrupted the logics of international communities and peaceful resolution. The repeated assurances that no decision had been made and the promise of consultation, verbalised especially in Bush's speech to the German Bundestag on 22 May 2002, made it still possible for the German government to downplay conflicts and conceal the dislocation. The tipping point came in late July 2002, when Germany's leaders became persuaded that the Bush administration was ready to go to a war no matter what. The pre-existing discursive order of German foreign policy was dislocated, prompting its rearticulation through policy decisions.

The important question is *whose* decisions? Once I have proposed to conceptualise subjectivity as split and power as productive, it is not possible to envisage decision-making in terms of autonomous choices of a small number of 'power-holders'. Power is constitutive of subjectivities and resides in discourse. At the same time, power and discourse are reproduced through subjects and by subjects. And some subjects are certainly positioned in a way that gives them the possibility and authority to articulate policies, while others are not. Politicians (bureaucrats, diplomats and so on) and are thus not autonomous, since the subject positions from which they speak are dependent on discursive reproduction. But they are the 'privileged storytellers' (Campbell 1993), the 'intellectuals of statecraft' (Ó Tuathail 1996), whose job it is to define the situation, describe the problem and offer a solution. Crucially, policy decisions (e.g. to oppose the US in public, to grant the US permission to use bases in Germany) are integral parts of the very constructions of the situation (e.g. in terms of irresponsible war-mongering by the US or as alliance duty stemming from the NATO Treaty). Therefore, it makes no sense to ask whether a 'crisis' preceded a decision ('crisis' as a cause, decision as an effect), or the other way round ('crisis' as a retrospective rationalisation/legitimation of a decision). The 'problem' and the 'solution' are constructed at the exactly same moment of the articulation of the signifying chain, in which pre-existing discursive resources are connected and modified through the contingent 'madness' of a decision.

Decisions are thus made in the dialectic relationship between the discursively constituted subject positions from which policymakers speak and act and the radical subjectivity that emerges from the cracks in the dislocated structure. They are necessarily written into the broader discursive terrain, in which decisions are accepted and reproduced, as well as contested and challenged. Policymakers thus perform decisions, but certainly do not 'own' them, as these are dependent on broader social consent – at least within the government and



the bureaucracy that implements them, but usually also within at least a part of the society. Political agency and political decisions are thus always collective phenomena. This consent can be achieved only through the construction of particular narratives and political projects, within which policies are written as possible, reasonable, legitimate or even necessary. Therefore, to analyse decisions and policies is to analyse the discursive struggles around them, which are waged across different discursive arenas.

There were three main constructions of the 'Iraq crisis' in the German discourse. One thing they had in common was that Saddam Hussein, casually labelled as 'tyrant', 'despot' and 'dictator', was a problem for the international community. However, for most articulations, he was neither the only nor the main issue to be dealt with. The multiple 'crises' can then be differentiated according to what the key 'problem' was. For some, it was the American administration and its illegitimate push for a war in Iraq. For others, the problem was the German government and its defiant response to the American call for assistance. These two projects will be discussed in the first part. In the second section, I will outline yet another type of response, one which rejected reducing the 'crisis' to a single problem, pointing to a number of different issues to be dealt with instead. Curiously, all the three constructions of the 'Iraq crisis' were actually very little about what was to be done with Iraq itself (also Leithner 2009: 109). Instead, they provided different articulations of nodal points such as 'war' or 'isolation', as well as the subject positions of the German government, German society and the United States. In the third section, I will ask how foreign policy was articulated in the discursive struggle between these different constructions.

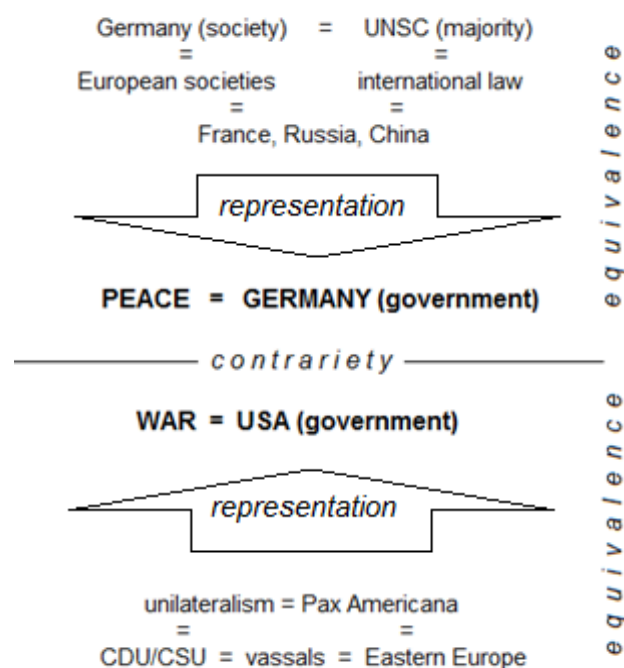
### **Logic of equivalence: Hierarchical binaries and radical borders**

Projects constructed through the operation of the logic of equivalence simplify political space through the erection of a single boundary and the creation of two radically opposed camps. One or more hierarchical binaries are used during the process, such as barbarism versus civilisation, war versus peace or reaction versus progress. Opposing signifying chains are then constructed around these articulations, *within* which nodal points and subject positions are linked as equivalent in relation to a common enemy. One or a few signifiers come to represent each of the two chains. The relationship *between* the two chains is than that of contrariety (a detailed discussion was provided in Chapter 3). These projects are hegemonic in the dynamic sense of the term, as they construct discursive coalitions from disparate elements and aspire to restructure the existing social order, in the German case by providing a new articulation of the three social logics. The two projects discussed in this

section are incommensurable on the level of content, but their structure and function is exactly the same: either you are with us, or you are against us.

#### a) Anti-war project: 'Make law, not war'

The first project rejected the interpellation by the 'axis of evil' and provided a distinct series of its own binaries, central of which was the hierarchical split between 'war' and 'peace'. It was articulated by the government, especially in its vocal opposition to the supposed 'adventures' of war in summer 2002 and the diplomatic offensive in favour of a 'peaceful solution' in January-March 2003. It was further reproduced in the language of the coalition parties and the PDS as well as in the liberal-left media (*SZ*, *Der Spiegel*). The tropes and signifiers used in this project resemble the discussion of the social logic of peaceful resolution (and to a lesser extent also international communities). However, the focus here is not on the content of the norms, but rather on the way how these routinised and valued signifiers are used to reconstruct identities and divide the discursive space. The questions asked are therefore no longer 'how do we do foreign policy?' (sovereignly, peacefully, internationally), but 'what does peace mean in the current situation?' and 'who is for peace and who is against it?'



#### Structure of the anti-war project

First move in the construction of the project was the installation of 'war' and 'peace' as the binary nodal points around which everything else would be structured. Fischer highlighted

the importance of Germany's UNSC membership by saying that the Security Council will be the forum to discuss 'war and peace' (Fischer 2002l: 22). Such articulations then became prominent as the UNSC debates were peaking, emphasising the contrariety between the two, and *only* two, options, for instance in Fischer's speech in the UNSC on 7 March 2003: "The Security Council, we all stand before an important decision, probably a historical turning point. The alternatives are clear: Disarmament of Iraq through war or disarmament through exploitation of all peaceful means." (Fischer 2003g: 4) Similarly, Schröder differentiated between the opposites of the 'logic of peace' and the 'logic of war' (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003e: 2480; Schröder 2003d: 21), lamenting that the latter had prevailed. Importantly, this binary already entailed the construction of military operations in Iraq as 'war', rather than as a 'mission' or 'deployment' (*Einsatz*), which is the language usually used for operations that enjoy Germany's support (e.g. Zehfuss 2007, Nonhoff and Stengel 2014).

In a second move, signifying chains were constructed around the contrary nodal points. On the 'peace' side of the boundary, the key equivalence was between 'peace' and the subject position of the German government. This connection was then utilised to forge equivalential links to other subject positions, first within the German context, constructing broad political identities around the cause of 'peace' and rallying them behind the government. For Schröder, his and the foreign minister's policy enjoyed support from within the 'society in Germany'. Mentioning a number of other subjects, he continued that "[b]oth churches support this position, many, many intellectuals [...] have defined their position. And this [position] is identical with what we have said. I do not have the impression that there is a lack of support for this policy of mine among the German people, to the very contrary." (Schröder 2003a) Similarly, Fischer's chain of equivalence linked different ideological camps, arguing that the reservation against war was "not only a matter of the left part of our population", but was shared also by 'civic-conservative', 'liberal', 'christian-conservative' and 'green-alternative' voters (Fischer 2003a). In a nutshell, there was equivalence between the government and a "large majority of our people" (Schröder 2003d: 21).

Simultaneously, anti-war connections were built also internationally. Chains of equivalence were drawn between states, e.g. through "our joint declaration with France and Russia, which is supported by China, and is in line with other members of the Security Council", which calls for the exploitation of "all options for a peaceful solution of the conflict" (Schröder in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1877). Later, the articulation was extended to the 'majority' in the UNSC (Schröder in Deutscher Bundestag 2003e: 2480). Connections were not made only between nations, but also other subjects. In Fischer's words, preventing the war was "the task on which we are now all – by 'we' I mean the international community, also the members of the Security Council, the European Union – working in the transatlantic

alliance” (Fischer 2003f: 27). Finally, links were drawn also between populations and societies, with the effect of splitting peoples from their respective governments and rallying them behind the ‘peace’ cause. Fischer argued in the Bundestag that “71 percent of the German population reject war. Such unequivocal, adverse attitude is there not only in Germany, but also in Great Britain and in France, where the numbers are just as high. When we were in Spain yesterday, I read that 91 percent of the population there rejected war.” (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1884) Echoing this statement, the press also contributed on the ‘peace’ side by differentiating between ‘Europe’ and ‘war’, and consequently, ‘Europe’ and ‘America’. In the words of the sociologist Ulrich Beck in *Der Spiegel*, “Make law, not war” was the European credo, whereas for the Americans it was rather “Make war, not law.” (Beck 2003: 56).

On the ‘war’ side of the boundary the central links were forged between ‘war’ and the United States. The official language of the government was less active on this side (even though not completely silent), most likely because of the diplomatic conventions that inhibit the criticism of allied countries. The gap was filled above all by the PDS and the press. Already the construction of ‘war’ suggests that the intervention in Iraq was something to be opposed on the grounds of the norms of peaceful resolution. Multiple predicates were added to further highlight the message that the Iraq war was a bad thing, ‘unjustifiable’ (Roland Claus in Deutscher Bundestag 2002a: 21788), or an ‘adventure’ (Schröder 2002b). As a *SZ* columnist put it, the war was ‘illegitimate’, since “it is no legitimate self-defence. It is no humanitarian intervention. And it is no action of crisis management.” (Prantl 2003b) For some in the press and the PDS, it was even illegal (Petra Pau in Deutscher Bundestag 2003f: 2747, Augstein 2002, Münch 2003f) as a ‘war of aggression’ (Gesine Löttsch in Deutscher Bundestag 2003e: 2544 and 2003g: 2896), a trope avoided by the government so as to minimise the doubt of non-compliance with the provisions of the Basic Law through its assistance to the war effort.

The principal subject positions were those of the United States and the US government, which were closely linked to ‘war’: “Washington wants to wage its war against Saddam at almost any price,” an opinion piece in the *SZ* maintained (Kister 2003). This was very often related to George W. Bush himself, for whom, according to an article in *Der Spiegel*, “war is the continuation of politics with other means” (Hoyng and Spörl 2003). It was not only the president, since elsewhere the chain was extended also to other American subject positions. “George W. Bush wants war. He is not alone. Dick Cheney wants it too, so do the Pentagon and 58 percent of the American population.” (Kreye 2002) The war-mongering aspect in the construction of American identities was further complemented by a unilateralist one, often coupled with images of America’s military power. ‘Hyperpower America’ was ‘going it

alone' (Ihlau et al. 2003: 110) and it was 'isolated worldwide' (Simons and Spörl 2002: 145). It was the 'last great hegemonic power in this world', which was trying to break free from international rules and install a 'Pax Americana' (Hirsch 2003). Unlike his father the 'internationalist' (Simons and Spörl 2002: 142), Bush the son was a 'unilateralist' for whom "[i]nternational treaties, multinational agreements mean little in his political worldview" (Ihlau et al. 2003: 111).

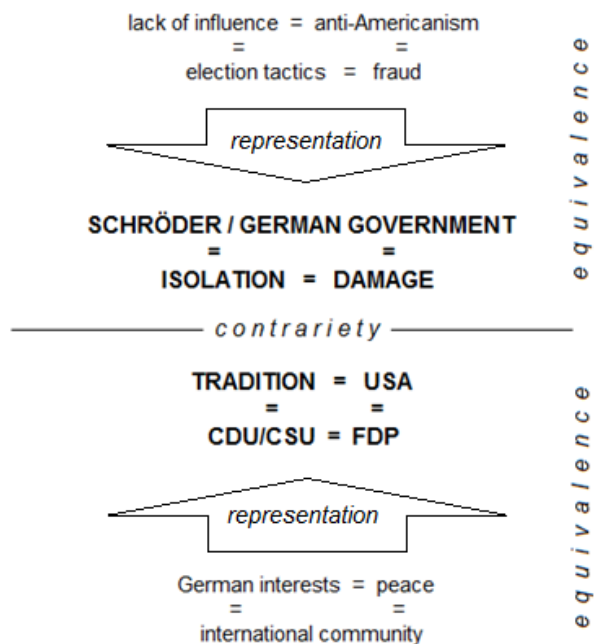
Other subject positions were constructed as equivalent with the US, usually in a way that would highlight their international marginalisation and/or subordination to Washington. In the German context, this was the case above all of the CDU/CSU, which Schröder labelled as belonging to the 'coalition of the willing' (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d: 1879) and at odds with the majority in the Security Council (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003f: 2729). In the words of *SZ* commentaries, "[i]n the Iraq crisis the Union [CDU/CSU] is with the war supporters" (Höll 2003); 'isolated' since the party "has lost its basis" (Prantl 2003c). Internationally, the states supporting the American position were pictured as mere tools of US policies. For *Der Spiegel*, Britain, Spain, Italy and Poland were all acting as Washington's 'vassals' (Beste et al. 2003b: 25, Koch 2003: 33). This allegation was held particularly strongly against the East European states that signed the two letters in support of the US position, which were presented as assisting to split the EU's common foreign policy (Koch 2003: 33), only to 'report for duty' to their new 'hegemon' (Beste et al. 2003d: 102).

In sum, the anti-war hegemonic project responded to the dislocation by blaming the US. The 'crisis' was articulated as being about the threat of an illegitimate or even illegal war, pushed unilaterally against the will of the majority of states and peoples and with the support of merely a few subordinate countries. Facing a situation constructed in these terms, the government rearticulated its position in terms of all the three social logics of foreign policy, by portraying itself as taking sovereign decisions, which were at the same time targeted at preserving peace and in line with international law and the majority within international communities. However, the social logics themselves could not remain unchanged by their 'application'. State sovereignty was redefined in terms of the government being a true representative of the population. Sovereignty thus rested in the will of the people, rather than in the capacity of an elected government to define what is best and act upon it. The logic of peaceful resolution was redefined in terms of absolute opposition to and withdrawal from 'war'. The logic of international communities was articulated as valid yet secondary in this project, since the rejection of 'war' was more important. Still, the government insisted on solving the crisis within international institutions and being in line with majorities in the UNSC or in the European population. The anti-war project thus offered a particular

rearticulation of the three social logics based above all around the notions of ‘popular sovereignty’ and absolutely defined ‘peace’.

### b) Anti-isolation project: ‘Standing all alone’

A very different construction of the ‘crisis’ was offered by the anti-isolation project that was articulated by the right-wing opposition (CDU/CSU, FDP) and in all of the media outlets under examination. Dislocation of Germany’s discursive order was not located directly in the ‘axis of evil’, but only in the subsequent vocal opposition of the German government. In its verbal attacks on the Americans and the a priori refusal to participate in a military intervention in Iraq, the government – and Schröder in particular – departed from the “core elements of the foreign policy consensus,” as Werner Hoyer of the FDP argued (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002c: 110). Therefore, it was rather Schröder who was the problem, not Bush. The focus was above all on the negative construction of the government, forging the central link between Schröder, ‘isolation’ and ‘damage’. The opposing chain was constructed less explicitly, usually in terms of what it is that the government has abandoned or damaged. The key elements here were the subject position of the United States and tropes associated with Germany’s foreign policy tradition, of which the opposition politicians themselves posed as guardians.



**Structure of the anti-isolation project**

The central signifier was ‘isolation’. In the words of an official document of the CDU/CSU faction, “the Federal Government has isolated itself with its Iraq policy from the United

States and the most important partners in the European Union” (Deutscher Bundestag 2002d: 1). This was particularly valid for the chancellor personally, who, as *BILD* put it, was “isolated in Europe” (BILD 2003c), “[i]solated in the world, increasingly isolated in his own party” (Gösmann 2003b). Other similar predicates were added to reinforce the message, for instance that Germany was ‘alone’. Angela Merkel described the government’s foreign policy as shifting from “the unconditional solidarity on 11 September 2001 to the unconditional going it alone [*Alleingang*] on 11 September 2002.” (in Deutscher Bundestag 2002b: 25608) *BILD* asked the following questions in its headlines: “Is Germany standing all alone?” (BILD 2003b) “How alone is Germany in the world?” (BILD 2003c) Others portrayed the government as putting Germany in ‘offside’ (Edmund Stoiber in Deutscher Bundestag 2002b: 25576, Werner Hoyer in Deutscher Bundestag 2002e: 654), or as tempted by “neutrality and isolationism” (bko 2002b).

Another common link was between the government and ‘damage’, which was often described as without precedent. “In foreign and security policy there was never before such damage for the Federal Republic of Germany,” lamented Eckart von Klaeden of the CDU (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003b: 1848). However, it was not only Germany that was hurt by the government. The list of ‘damage’ included also German-American relations (former foreign minister Klaus Kinkel in BILD 2003a, bko 2002c, Kornelius 2003c), the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (von Klaeden in Deutscher Bundestag 2003b, Westerwelle in Deutscher Bundestag 2003f), the North Atlantic alliance (Deutscher Bundestag 2003c, Feldmeyer 2002), the United Nations (Deutscher Bundestag 2003c, Kohler 2003, Kornelius 2003d), or even ‘the free world’ (Michael Glos in Deutscher Bundestag 2002f). The notion of damage served to contrast the government to almost everything that was – or ought to have been – cherished in German foreign policy. This drew the opposition between the key principles (social logics) and the government that should have been pursuing and furthering them, effectively excluding the government from the desirable status quo.

This line was further developed by articulating the government in contrariety to the signifiers associated with all the three social logics. First, the ‘isolation’ course equalled ‘lack of influence’ (bko 2002a) over the development of the Iraq crisis, since Schröder was ‘no partner for dialogue’ for Washington (Bannas 2003). By not being able to have an impact on events, Germany lost something of her agency and, therefore, her sovereignty. Indeed, ‘isolation’ was not “in the interest of Germany” (Kornelius 2003). Second, Schröder was in contrariety also to the ‘peace’ imperative, since his policies were actually making war more likely: “You with your policies do not make peace more secure, but rather war more probable,” (Schäuble in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1903, similarly also Merkel 2003b and Kornelius 2003c) since “you have diminished the pressure on Saddam Hussein” (Merkel in

Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1880). Third and most prominently, the government was in non-compliance with the internationalist norm, as shown in the following question raised by Werner Hoyer (FDP): “How credible is our affirmation of multilateralism, when we from the very start say: ‘No matter what the United Nations Security Council decides, not with us!’?” (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003b: 1850, similarly Beste et al. 2003a) Apart from the UN, the government also ‘blocked’ and ‘hamstrung’ Europe (Schäuble in Deutscher Bundestag 2002c: 97), ‘splitting’ it and depriving it of her role as a ‘foreign policy actor’ (Andreas Schockenhoff in Deutscher Bundestag 2003b: 1857). It even put the country outside of the ‘Western community of values’ (Michael Glos in Deutscher Bundestag 2002f: 873), for which, once again, Schröder was responsible: “You will [...] go down in history as someone who led Germany out of the international community.” (Westerwelle in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1889) In the most radical articulations from August and September 2002, the government was even helping Saddam Hussein. Germany’s policies “please only Saddam Hussein” (Kornelius 2002a) as he could take them as a “guarantee of the existence of his dictatorship” (Kohler 2002).

The obvious question is why the government would want to act in such a manner. In the anti-war project, the reasons are presented as a combination of election tactics and Schröder’s unsuitability for the job. Rather than a statesman, the chancellor was a ‘market crier’ (*Marktschreier*, Schwennicke 2002a), playing with ‘war scare’ and ‘anti-Americanism’ only to win the elections (Gösmann 2003a, bko 2002d). With reference to his career in regional politics, an *SZ* article argued that “the chancellor does world politics as if he was governing Lower Saxony”, gaining the reputation of an ‘overambitious amateur’ (Kister 2003) and pursuing a dilettantish foreign policy (Thomas Strobl in Deutscher Bundestag 2003b: 1858, Michael Glos in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1891). The ‘election’ argument would get another twist in relation to Germany’s ‘indirect’ support of the US war effort, when the charge of instrumentalising foreign policy was complemented with that of misleading the voters. The idea that Germany could stay out of the war was a ‘false impression’ (Wolfgang Gerhardt in Deutscher Bundestag 2002f: 931), ‘half-truth’ (Fried 2002), an ‘illusion’ (swn 2002, Höll 2002) or even “the most unashamed fraud on the voters that I [...] and many others have ever seen” (Merkel in Deutscher Bundestag 2002b: 25607). In this logic, not only was it that Schröder’s use of Iraq in elections was unstatesmanlike and against the interests of the country, but departing from the promise also put the government in contrariety to the people that voted it into office.

In the anti-isolation project, most of the articulations occurred on the ‘isolation’ side, portraying all the ‘damage’ that was done by the government and the chancellor in person. The other side of the boundary was to a large extent left implicit; as containing everything



the government was opposing, damaging or mistreating – Germany’s national interests and international credibility, the possibility of a peaceful solution to the Iraq crisis, the multilateral order. This is best summarised in tropes associated with the foreign policy tradition, from which the government had supposedly departed, such as the ‘fundamental consensus’ that was ‘abandoned’ (Gerd Müller in Deutscher Bundestag 2002f: 934) or the ‘cornerstones’ that were ‘challenged’ (Deutscher Bundestag 2003c). Addressing Schröder, the FDP leader Guido Westerwelle put it as follows: “Your policy is unhistorical. It ignores the whole German foreign policy line of the chancellors, of the foreign ministers Walter Scheel, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Klaus Kinkel.” (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1889)

The subject positions in the ‘tradition’ chain were also usually implicit. In fact, they were the positions from which the criticism was being voiced, which most often meant the politicians of the CDU/CSU and the FDP, who presented themselves as guardians of the foreign policy tradition. Most important explicit articulations were reserved to American subject positions. Just like in the anti-war project, the US were in the relationship of contrariety to the German government. However, the positive articulations – including peace and multilateralism – were on the American side this time. For leading CDU politicians, the United States “are not only our allies, they are also our friends” (Karl Lamers in Deutscher Bundestag 2002g: 550) and “friendship with the United States is [...] fundamental” (Merkel 2003b). These constructions were echoed and supported above all by *BILD*, which ran a series of articles on the history of German-American relations, using headlines like “America gave us the economic miracle” (Baring 2003b) and “Without the USA Germany would still be divided” (Baring 2003c).

The anti-isolation and anti-war projects thus shared the positioning of the German government in contrariety to the United States. The key tropes of the two were also very similar. However, the purpose of the anti-isolation discourse was to portray the government as outside of, and ultimately against, the key principles embodied in Germany’s foreign policy tradition. This made the project simultaneously radical in its exclusion of the government from the German community (as defined by the three social logics) and conservative in its nostalgic insistence on the previous hegemonic state. Still, even this apparent reproduction of the ‘status quo ante Schröder’ entailed a rearticulation of the three social logics, since they had to be ‘applied’ to a different context. In the anti-isolation project’s construction of state sovereignty the emphasis was put on the notion of the national interest, with the implication that the government should define it and act even against the popular opinion if it differs from such interest. Unlike in the anti-war project, this notion of sovereignty is much more elitist than popular. Peaceful resolution was tightly linked and effectively submerged to the logic of international community in the articulation that

equalled the breaking of the US-led international coalition with making war more likely. Preservation of peace was thus possible only by an absolute adherence to international unity. The rearticulation of the social logics offered by this project was therefore predominantly an elitist and internationalist one.

### **Logic of difference: Pluralising discursive spaces**

The two hegemonic projects did not struggle only against each other, but were also constantly subverted by the logic of difference. This logic does not present totalising narratives, but rather aims at breaking the binaries and signifying chains offered by equivalential projects. The result of differential articulations is a much more complex political space, in which the meaning of the ‘crisis’ breaks into multiple issues and can no longer be subsumed under ‘with us, or against us’. Each of the problems is treated as somewhat separate and, crucially, solvable within the existing hegemonic constellation, which is presented as broad or flexible enough to accommodate different opinions. Therefore, differential articulations in effect deny the dislocatory experiences by downplaying the extent to which the order of social logics has been shaken and by calling for ‘business as usual’ solutions. This is the defensive aspect of the dynamic form of hegemony, which results in an active preservation of the existing social order (Howarth 2013: 203). The radical potential of political contestation is being curtailed by presenting the struggles as led *within* the order, but not *about* it. In the Iraq crisis, various differential operations were present across the three arenas. I will discuss them by focusing on the differentiations in international priorities, policies of the German government, German-American relations, German (and American) subject positions and within the war/peace binary.

First, with respect to *international priorities*, the German government differentiated the international agenda by opposing the efforts to single out Iraq as the top issue. This did not articulate a radical and uncompromising opposition against the ‘war’ (like the anti-war project) and it also did not deny that Iraq was a problem that had to be dealt with. But it was neither the only one, nor the most important one; Iraq was a ‘false priority’ (Schröder 2002d, Fischer 2002c, 2003i). Instead, since Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and elsewhere was far from over, the central focus of the international community should have remained on terrorism. “We have enough to do with the fight against terrorism. Then, in my view, it would be wrong if we declared regime change in Baghdad the top priority,” Fischer argued (2002i). The list was much longer. Fischer also “would have liked to see other priorities set after Afghanistan”, above all “terrorism, religious hatred and weapons of mass destruction.” (Fischer 2003h) For Struck, other tasks included “the attempt at a political

solution of the central regional conflicts in the Middle East and in the Indian subcontinent” and ensuring “the protection of human rights – as for instance on our doorstep in the Balkans” (2002a: 22).

Second, differentiation was also evident within the *policies of the German government*. The previous paragraph already suggests the first important distinction, which was made between Iraq and terrorism. Unlike for the US administration, there was no place for Iraq as ‘Phase II’ of the struggle against terrorism, since the two were fundamentally different. Fischer repeated that “there is no evidence for a connection between Saddam and al Qaeda” (Fischer 2002i, also Fischer 2002c). Therefore, the government could at the same time reject involvement in Iraq, while playing an active part in operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere that were constructed as strictly within the bounds of fighting terrorism. This included even very controversial measures, in particular the presence of the anti-WMD units in Kuwait, which was repeatedly defended as part of the UN-sanctioned and Bundestag-approved Operation Enduring Freedom (Schröder 2002a, 2002d, Struck 2002c). Another differentiation was drawn in direct relation to Iraq, separating the ‘participation in the Iraq war’ from the performance of ‘alliance duty’ as two distinct policies (Schröder 2002d, Fischer 2003f). In Schröder’s own words: “Germany, as I have assured, does not participate in the Iraq war. But naturally will Germany fulfil her obligations in the framework of the Nato alliance.” (Schröder 2003d: 22) This difference was also supported in the *SZ*, which argued that it was “worlds apart if German soldiers fight on the Tigris, or if the Bundeswehr takes care of the security of Americans on German soil.” (Kornelius 2002b, similarly also Schwennicke 2002b)

Differences within the government policy were articulated also by those who criticised it, typically between the content of the policy and the way it was pursued by the government. “Never before in the history of the Federal Republic was a so correct and so important policy represented so badly as the German no to the Iraq war,” an *SZ* columnist opined (Prantl 2003a). The key distinction here was between actions and public rhetoric, where it was usually the latter that was seen as problematic – especially with respect to the United States. Scepticism towards the military solution may have been ‘justified’ for a *FAZ* columnist, but it should have been pursued through “the quiet exertion of influence between allies” (Kohler 2003). Friedbert Pflüger (CDU) argued that “[b]etween friends it is normal that sometimes opinions are exchanged. But taking the argument to the public is something that will not be understood in America.” (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002a: 21784) Drawing a link to the use of Iraq in the election campaign, for an *SZ* columnist the issue was “not the position of the red-green Federal Government. Problematic appear the motifs [...] and the vocabulary” (Schwennicke 2002a). This also led to a third differentiation, one between the justified

policies and the credibility of a government elected on an anti-war platform, yet doing “a little bit of war” nonetheless (Jä 2003). Even when they carried criticism, these articulations were working also against the anti-isolation project, since they concluded that important aspects of the government’s policies were correct or justified.

Third, a difference was constructed with respect to *German-American relations*. The purpose of this was to break the positioning of Germany and the US as antagonistic opponents and to replace it with a more complex relationship. The separation of Iraq from terrorism played a role, as it made it possible to be against the United States with respect to Iraq, while still being with them in most other issues. Iraq was thus articulated as an exception to the otherwise harmonious relationship, as the ‘current discord’ that cannot shatter the ‘solid bedrock’ of shared values (Voigt 2002b: 17). While there may have been disagreements, the ‘substance’ of the ‘community of values’ remained ‘untouched’ (Schröder in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1876). Even the government was thus keen to present itself as ‘side by side’ with America (Struck 2002b). Very often, this was accompanied by the articulation of Germany’s debt and gratitude: “We will not forget that it was the Americans, who, after the darkest epoch of German history, made a democratic and stable Germany possible through their political and economic support,” Struck said in October 2002 (Struck 2002b: 4, similarly Fischer 2003e). Germany’s leaders were explicit in their rejection of anti-American sentiments and positions (Fischer 2002e, 2003e, Voigt 2002b): “Anti-Americanism would be [...], despite all current disagreement, entirely inappropriate.” (Fischer 2002d)

This differentiation between the general transatlantic bond and the particular opposition in the Iraq crisis was supported by various metaphors. For Fischer, the two countries had now a ‘partnership in contradiction’ (Fischer 2003a). Nevertheless, the Americans were still ‘family’: “When there are differences, they must be discussed. [...] But the stability of the transatlantic alliance is in my opinion indispensable and it can also withstand stress. These are differences within the family that must be discussed.” (Fischer 2002e) Werner Hoyer (FDP) spoke about ‘our American friends’, who might have made ‘a mistake’, “but they are and remain our friends.” (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003g: 2891) The metaphor was further extended to argue that between friends, it is honesty and not blind agreement that is of the utmost importance. ‘Reliable friends’ are only those, “who say their opinion openly and critically” (Augstein 2002). And as long as Germany and the USA are democracies, there is even a less of a deal in having an argument, because, as Fischer suggests, “[d]emocracies must express themselves openly [...] on the basis of mutual understanding and awareness of interests.” (Fischer 2002b: 25) Last but not least, there was not a single party that would deserve to take all the guilt for the situation and both Germany and America were to be blamed for the split. Even the critics of the government admitted that “[r]esponsibility for the

situation lies on both sides of the Atlantic.” (Westerwelle in Deutscher Bundestag 2003f: 2715).

Fourth, another way of cancelling the antagonistic relationship between Germany and the United States was by introducing difference within the two *subject positions*, disarticulating totalising national identities and highlighting divisions within both countries. Bypassing the nation-state enabled portraying the disagreement as cutting through both societies and even governments, not a head-on confrontation of the two nations. This could be done by differentiating the societies from their governments and suggesting that the discord was between the latter, but not the former (Voigt 2002b). “People continue talking [to each other], even when the heads of governments do not.” (Lüscher 2002) The papers reported that the support for Bush was by no means unanimous in the US and that his policies were challenged by a number of senior figures, including Al Gore, Madeleine Albright and Zbigniew Brzezinski (Lüscher 2002, Andresen 2002, von Ilseman and Zand 2002). Fischer in particular was keen to argue that his reservations were very similar to those of prominent US critics of the Bush administration, especially the top members of George H.W. Bush’s foreign policy team James Baker and Brent Scowcroft (Fischer 2002e, 2003i).

Differences were made also within the two governments. To a question paraphrasing Kissinger’s often cited complaint about the non-existence of a single European phone number, Fischer responded that “in the USA at the moment you also cannot get through with one telephone number, you need more of them there too!” (Fischer 2003e: 24) Within the Bush administration, a distinction was drawn between the ‘hawks’ pushing the neoconservative agenda, such as the ‘chief hawk’ Donald Rumsfeld (*Ober-Falke*, von Ilseman and Zand 2002: 108), and the more open, pragmatic and European-minded Colin Powell. On the German side, especially in the media, a line was drawn between the ‘green stiletto’ represented by the ‘analytical Atlanticist’ Fischer, and the ‘social democrat battle axe’ attitude embodied by the ‘crass Gaullist’ Schröder (Beste et al. 2003a: 34). While both opposed the war, the foreign minister’s line was seen as more nuanced and diplomatic, whereas the chancellor was portrayed as confrontational and opportunistic.

Also the relationship between the German government and the opposition was deprived of its radically binary nature. While introducing difference within the government required splitting, this operation was rather about highlighting common ground with respect to some shared values and signifiers. The central similarity was articulated in relation to the rejection of ‘war’, for instance in the speech of Edmund Stoiber (CSU): “No one in this continent wants war. No one in Germany wants war, neither the federal chancellor, nor me, neither the SPD, nor the CDU/CSU, nor other parties in this house.” (Stoiber in Deutscher Bundestag

2002b: 25575) Therefore, there were only ‘nuances’ separating the government from the opposition (rab 2002), since the aversion to ‘war’ was broadly shared. On this basis, some articulations directly challenged the anti-war hegemonic project, providing a very good illustration of how the logic of difference works: “Who criticises the red-green [coalition] is not against Germany, but against the policy of the red-green, and who wants a different foreign and security policy is no warmonger, but as big a friend of peace as you on the side of the government,” Guido Westerwelle argued (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003f: 2714). In Merkel’s words, “[y]ou want peace, we want war. We will not take part in this division of labour [...]. The difference in this house [...] is not whether we want war or peace.” (ibid.: 2732)

Fifth, but difference there surely was – one that cut across the *war/peace binary* and introduced shades of grey within both of its poles. Therefore, there were different kinds of wars, as well as different kinds of peace. While there was no doubt that ‘peace’ was the ultimate aim, there could still be a ‘bad peace’ and a ‘reasonable war’. Angela Merkel argued that “[p]eace is a superior good. But in no way can the secure peace of the future be exchanged for the elusive peace of the day.”(Merkel 2003a) What was thus different were the means and strategies for achieving lasting peace. For the opposition as well as parts of the press, these included even military actions. However, in another important differentiation, war was always and exclusively the “ultima ratio, the very last means; it is never a prima ratio” (pra 2003, very similarly also Merkel in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d, Glos in Deutscher Bundestag 2003f). Differences were thus inserted not only to the relation between the government and the opposition, but even to the binary between war and peace.

All these five types of articulations were cutting across the binaries imposed by the ‘axis of evil’, the anti-war and the anti-isolation projects, reconstructing the political space in pluralist terms. If ‘with us, or against us’ is the logic of equivalential projects, differential articulations are rather about the ‘on the one hand, on the other hand’. In other words, there are diverging, yet equally legitimate ways of performing the same social logics, or at least some wiggle room. The hegemonic order is thus articulated as broad enough to accommodate different policies, which, indeed, is also a rearticulation of the ostensibly mechanically reproduced social order. This is clear for some of the appropriations of social logics that were provided through differential operations. The government presented a more relaxed version of the logic of international communities as captured in the construction of ‘family differences’ within the transatlantic community. In this redefinition, it was the general values that were central, not particular issue areas. It was thus possible to agree with partners in some aspects, while opposing them – even unilaterally – in other areas. Similarly,

the opposition came with a more open interpretation of the logic of peaceful resolution, in which war was not excluded absolutely, but rather presented as the very ‘last resort’.

Differential logics arguably prevailed within the political arenas in the last weeks and days before the attack, when the positions had been already taken. The government softened the criticism of the US, shifting towards the return to ‘business as usual’ in German-American relations. Simultaneously, the right-wing opposition emphasised the ‘no one wants war’ line, in which the differences from the government were presented as not about the ultimate ends, but rather about the means of achieving them. Therefore, it would perhaps be possible to argue that differential articulations prevailed *eventually*. However, there was more complexity to the case. First of all, this coalescing happened only *after* the key foreign policy decisions were made and implemented. It could thus inform us about the way how order was being restored retrospectively, but not really about the key focus of this thesis: the foreign policies itself. Second, while politicians of the parliamentary parties may have shifted closer to each other, this was not the case in the media or the society in general. Anti-war demonstrations continued and so did the contestation of the policies of the government, as well as of the line of the opposition. These issues have to be addressed in the following section.

### **Foreign policy in a ‘discursively disordered terrain’**

I have shown that the dislocation of the hegemonic order of the three social logics led to intense public contestation, bringing about two totalising projects based on the operation of the logic of equivalence and a series of pluralising articulations based on the logic of difference. Did this discursive struggle result in a dominant construction of the ‘meaning of the crisis’, which would impose itself as a depoliticised and seemingly objective ‘reality’, rearticulate the three social logics in a certain way and thereby achieve hegemony in the static sense? This was clearly not the case, not even briefly before the attack on Iraq. Both the two equivalential projects and the differential articulations gained significant traction within the political and media arenas. Unlike in the United States after 9/11, where the ‘freedom’ versus ‘terrorism’ discourse became entrenched as the ‘common sense’ (Jackson 2005, Croft 2006, Solomon 2015), Germany remained a ‘discursively disordered terrain’ (Bach 1999: 176). Even though there was consensus regarding the general rules (social logics) of foreign policy, there was disagreement even on the very basic issues of what the ‘Iraq crisis’ was about and how these rules should be ‘applied’ in foreign policy decision-making.

The question is why none of the articulations managed to hegemonise the discursive space and why cacophony and disorder prevailed instead. This must be answered on two levels, following the distinction between the signifying form and the affective force of discourse (Laclau 2004: 326). Since the latter will be discussed extensively in the following chapter, I will restrict my focus here on the former, which concerns the specific way the logics of equivalence and difference were articulated and mobilised in the discursive struggle. This issue is of primary importance, since it also relates to the central problem of inconsistency in foreign policies. In general terms, the two political logics seem to have operated in a way, in which neither managed to prevail, leading to their mutual neutralisation. The two hegemonic projects were disrupted by articulations of differences. At the same time, however, they were resilient and popular enough to be simply accommodated or silenced by differential articulations, and therefore kept reappearing and reigniting public contestation. The result was neither a radical transformation of the foreign policy discourse, nor simply its successful defence by absorbing the challenges within the status quo.

Instead, the discursive struggle ended up in an unresolved deadlock, which was terminated only by the attack on Iraq and the subsequent shift to 'business as usual' in German-American relations in the political arenas and to the reporting of the war itself in the media arena. The existing order of social logics was preserved without a substantial rearticulation in the end, but rather by 'forgetting' the argument and getting over it than by winning it. As there was no hegemonic rearticulation of the three social logics, this 'forgetting' left them simultaneously reinforced and more open-ended. The order on the level of social logics was thus symbiotic with a disorder regarding their 'application'. Crucially, not only was it that the German public sphere or the foreign policy community as a whole failed to embrace one particular construction of the crisis, but the same was true also of individual policymakers. Neither the chancellor, nor the ministers, nor the key politicians of the opposition managed to stick to a coherent discourse. Instead, the cacophony and disorder was thus very much internalised all the way down to the individual level, so that many 'in-dividual' politicians were actually very much divided in constructing and reproducing different, even contradictory signifying chains defining the meaning of the 'crisis'.

This is essential for explaining foreign policies, whose inconsistency resulted also from their simultaneous articulation within multiple signifying chains. In effect, Germany's foreign policies were addressing different 'Iraq crises' at the same time. The vocal rejection of 'war' and the practices of building a coalition against the United States in the Security Council and elsewhere were part and parcel of the anti-war project. In contrast, the granting of transport and overflight rights, protection of bases and other similar measures were reproducing the US-friendly differential articulations of 'family differences' and 'alliance duty'. This



inconsistency was spotted across the discursive arenas (or, more precisely, this was constructed as inconsistent) and served as an important argument in the contestation of the policies of the government, preventing them from hegemonising the terrain. However, and this supports my earlier criticism of Hansen's argument that inconsistency forces decision makers to choose a single discourse (Hansen 2006: 138, 146), the German government did not manage to resolve exactly which 'crisis' it was addressing and got stuck with a 'dual track' policy.

Instead, denial was the chosen strategy, positing all policies as principled and mutually compatible. How could this be done, when the key articulations of the anti-war project were incommensurable with the differential constructions, e.g. when it came to the positioning of the US and German governments and the relation between them? There was one particular way of combining the two, which relied on the division between 'war' and 'alliance duty'. It made it possible to insist that there was "no direct or indirect participation in war" (Schröder in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d: 1877, similarly Schröder 2003a, Fischer 2002k, 2002l, Struck 2003b), since there were indeed no German boots on the ground (or at sea and in the air for that matter). On the other hand, the government could pursue a number of policies actually supporting the actions in Iraq, since all of these were outside of the 'war in Iraq'. The condition of this articulation was the immensely problematic encapsulation of 'war in Iraq' in terms of military fighting on the ground, as if all the supporting measures did not count. Importantly, this division was also heavily contested within the political and media discourses. Interestingly enough, Joschka Fischer admits these contradictions in Germany's foreign policies in retrospect (Fischer 2011: 182), suggesting that resolution via identifying with a single discourse may have not been possible even if the subjects themselves were actually aware of the tension.

The government's parallel construction of multiple discourses had paradoxical political effects. On the one hand, it fortified the policies against criticisms, since the government occupied a very broad discursive ground. It was in concord with the left-wing opposition and the peace movement in rejecting the war, yet it also overlapped with the right-wing opposition in its commitment to friendship with the United States. To challenge the government head-on would have meant either to accept 'war', or to reject the German-American alliance, both of which only very few people were prepared to do. The critics were thus outmanoeuvred to positions from which it was difficult to draw a clear line between them and the red-green government. On the other hand, the inconsistency also meant that the policies were actually open to criticisms from both angles at the same time. The peace movement, the PDS and part of the media could accuse Schröder and Fischer of 'indirect participation', adopting the anti-war discourse, yet situating the government on the 'war'

side of the boundary. In contrast, the CDU/CSU, the FDP and other media voices could reject the policies as anti-Americanist.

While this is less important, it is also worth noting that the opposition was struggling for consistency as much as the government. In fact, this was not the issue for the PDS and the peace movement, which opted for an uncompromising version of the anti-war project. As I have shown in the previous chapter, this was linked to the rejection of the social logic of international community and led to their marginalisation within the foreign policy community. The CDU/CSU and the FDP, however, were in a precarious position, since they simultaneously opposed the government and advocated measures very similar to those taken by it. Again, there were two discourses constructed simultaneously. The radical undertones in the criticism of the government were grounded in the anti-isolation hegemonic project, which enabled clear differentiation along the 'us and them' boundary. In contrast, the agreement with the basic policies (provision of bases, logistical support, Patriot missiles in Turkey and Israel etc.) while still retaining their own opinion with respect to the 'way' the policies were done or the acceptability of war as a 'last resort' were the products of differential articulations. Again, the problem was the commensurability of the two, since it becomes very difficult to argue that the government has 'damaged' all that is sacred and agree with most of its policies at the same time. This inconsistency was also targeted in the political and media discourses and held against the CDU in particular. And again, it was something that was not resolved, but rather 'lived with'.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have shown the different ways in which policies were articulated as part and parcel of broader constructions of the 'Iraq crisis'. Policy decisions neither precede nor succeed these constructions, since they are always already articulated within a broader signifying chain. A decision about a policy is thus also necessarily a decision about the 'crisis' – what is at stake, who are the parties, where is the boundary between them and how social logics should be applied. These decisions necessarily rely on pre-existing discursive resources, yet they also exercise the 'madness' of political agency by linking these resources together. In the German case, policies were articulated in discursive struggles between two totalising definitions of the 'Iraq crisis' (the anti-war and anti-isolation equivalential projects) and a series of differential articulations that inserted plurality into the discursive space. None of these particular articulations managed to impose itself as hegemonic and the struggle remained unresolved, even on the level of the government and its individual

members. Therefore, inconsistent policies were also the result of parallel constructions of different signifying chains of the 'Iraq crisis' on the part of the government.

A curious picture emerges in the confrontation of these conclusions with those of the previous chapter. The hegemonic order of the three social logics, which was manifested in the broadly shared consensus with respect to 'who we are and what we stand for' and 'what rules our foreign policy follows', was met with disordered responses to 'what this means in the current situation'. Paradoxical as it may seem, the simultaneous presence of order and disorder is an all-pervasive feature of social life, since discourses and practices entail *both* the elements of stability, regularity and repetition (social logics) *and* the indeterminacy and irregularity of the 'moment of madness' that is involved in their reproduction (political logics). Analogically, our subjectivity is composed of *both* subject positions and the relatively stable scripts provided by them *and* the radical subjectivity of creative reinvention of the self by adopting and modifying subject positions. Foreign policies, just like any other practices, are thus articulated and performed in a perpetual oscillation between order and disorder. Hegemonic orders are constantly being dislocated and challenged by disordering articulations, yet they also reimpose themselves by structuring and limiting these articulations through their habitual force, which stems from their never completely dislocated status of 'mere objective presence' (Laclau 1990).

Therefore, while the analysis of structural patterns of social logics that resembled IR constructivism and the 'practice turn' was insufficient in itself, it was also necessary. If I had started only from the more explicitly post-structurally oriented analysis of the politics of meaning-construction, I would have missed a crucial part of the picture. While signifiers like 'peace' or 'alliance' can be articulated in many ways and support many different policies as I have argued in this chapter, it was equally important to show that these signifiers keep reappearing over a longer period of time, that certain practices are linked to them and that it is necessary to invoke them to gain a voice in Germany's political discourse. With respect to their explanatory purchase, social and political logics are thus equally important, since crucial aspects of Germany's foreign policies would be missed if either of them were ignored. The same is valid also for fantasmatic logics, which I will discuss in the next chapter in order to shed light on the remaining problems, which are only amplified by the discussion of the relationship between the social and the political: What made the three social logics stick, when they were constantly being dislocated? Why did German politicians fail to offer a dominant meaning of the crisis, providing different, hardly commensurable constructions instead? These problems will be addressed by shifting focus to the psychoanalytically inspired analysis of affects, desires and fantasies. Thereby, the following

chapter will provide the third element of my critical explanation, which, again, is not superior, but equally important as the other two parts.

## 9 | Logic of fantasy and the desire for closure

### The affectively disordered terrain of German foreign policy

In the two previous chapters, I have explained the inconsistencies in Germany's foreign policies in terms of the potentially contradictory social logics and the incompatible attempts at their reconstruction through political logics. This chapter provides a third dimension of my discourse analysis by reading the same empirical materials through yet another question from the agenda outlined in Chapter 4: Why did certain policy options prevail over others? Arguing that durability and 'grip' (Glynos 2001) of discourses and practices result from the affective force that is channelled behind them, I will show that policy inconsistencies resulted also from conflicting identifications with different objects of desire. The affectivity of these identifications then also addresses the second aspect of the puzzle of Germany's discourse in the Iraq crisis: the emotional and existential nature of the debate.

The concept of fantasy, defined most simply as a narrative scenario promising the (impossible) achievement of the full enjoyment of a complete identity is crucial here. Fantasies help us explain how extra-discursive affect is translated into discourse in the form of socially constructed desire, which is hooked on particular discursive objects (*objet petit a*). Fantasies conceal the *ontological* lack, which is traumatically encountered in the moment of dislocation, by translating it to an *empirical* lack, a lack of the supposedly missing *objet petit a*. In policy discourse, the 'object' often takes the shape of a particular course of action. The structure of a fantasmatic narrative then poses our very identity as threatened and offers a particular policy as the way of making our identity whole again, or at least averting some irreparable damage to it. Debate about a particular policy issue, e.g. whether Saddam Hussein poses an immediate threat or whether inspections and sanctions work, is then elevated to an existential struggle about who we are. Crucially, the decision is then portrayed in 'black and white' terms, where there are only excessively beatific and excessively horrific options: either we recapture the *objet petit a* by performing a certain policy (and thereby reaffirm 'who we are'), or we lose it (and ourselves) for good.

Fantasies are multiple and necessarily particular constructs, but they are all driven by a single logic. This *logic* of fantasy is defined solely by the closure it brings to discourse by denying its radically contingent character. Apart from its explanatory role, the logic of fantasy also has a critical purchase because of its direct relationship to the notion of *ethical* critique. Such critique does not aim at the content of norms, but at the way subjects relate to them, more precisely whether they embrace or deny their radical contingency, the ultimate

lack in the social order, the real (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 197-198). Since “phantasy protects the real” (Lacan 1977: 41), ethical critique must work *against the logic of fantasy*. Therefore, this chapter is also most explicit in answering the final question on the agenda, which has nevertheless been present throughout the second half of the thesis: What, if anything, was wrong with Germany’s policies? From the discussion of ethics it follows that ‘wrong’ was the way how fantasies were deployed to conceal the radically contingent nature of the social logics and the political projects that were used to articulate foreign policies. Analysing the deployment of fantasies is thus important not only to explain policies and orders, but also to resist them. To be able to struggle with fantasies and, ultimately, not ‘give way’ to one’s desire (Žižek 1989, Glynos 2000) that they perpetuate, we first need to identify them.

The explanatory status of the logic of fantasy is equal to social and political logics in the sense that none of the three is superior, but the epistemological and methodological approach has to be different here. The ways in which social and political logics were analysed are well-established in IR and social sciences. With psychoanalytical approaches it is much less so (see Jacobsen 2013). While arguably being the part that promises the highest degree of originality and innovation, the analysis of fantasies and their logic also constitutes a potential epistemological minefield, since it entails the furthest departure from ‘scientific’ procedures. Fantasies allow us to say something about the real, which, nevertheless, notoriously resists symbolisation. However, the symbolic medium of language is what people use to communicate, academics included. This paradox of trying to capture in language something that perpetually escapes it is ultimately unresolvable. One way to deal with it is by black-boxing the real and staying in the comfort zone of traditional approaches to discourse, which shy away from ‘speculations’ about affects and desires. I have chosen a different way, one that is more challenging and controversial, but also enables me to say something about the largely unconscious affective dimension of politics through the notion of ‘encircling the real’ (Stavrakakis 1999, Stavrakakis 2007), that is by deducing its effects from their discursive manifestations.

This approach entails a theoretically-driven reading of the material, which makes visible traces of affectivity/the real in apparently unimportant and often marginal tropes, just like Freud saw the unconscious in the seemingly banal jokes or slips of tongue. In psychoanalysis, what appears marginal is often crucial, since it penetrates the carefully constructed public discourses and reveals the tensions under the ostensibly smooth surface of the social scripts we enact. Therefore, while it would be easy to reject the conclusions of this chapter on the basis that the tropes mapped here were not that common in public discourses, this would miss the point. Fantasies are indeed often only occasional and half-spoken and

searching for them requires a theoretically-informed ‘cherry-picking’. In this sense, the ‘method’ and style of this chapter is close to the political theory of authors like Slavoj Žižek, who freely articulate concepts with examples from politics, art or pop-culture without regard for the prevailing conventions of social science. (It should nevertheless be noted that I have presented my methodology in much detail in Chapter 5.) However, disciplinary walls are porous and, as it was put in a classical text more than twenty years ago, IR *is* political theory (Walker 1993). Lacanian reading can be highly relevant, but it has to be viewed as what it actually is – a contingent *interpretation* that presents a ‘candidate for truth and falsity’ (Glynos and Howarth 2007). Ultimately, the validity of my narrative is dependent on its ability to persuade the reader, for which one of the most important criteria should be whether it tells us something important and interesting about the analytically puzzling and politically salient problem of Germany’s foreign policies. I believe it does and I will demonstrate it in this chapter.

The argument proceeds in four steps and is sorted in a similar way as the previous two chapters. In the first three sections, I will map the most important fantasies in the German discourse as identified in the broader contexts of parliamentary debates and the media arena. Besides texts, I focus also on visuals (covers, photographs and caricatures), since images have a closer relationship to the real due to their ambiguous and emotionally-charged character, as I have argued in Chapter 5. In the fourth section, I will move my attention to the official discourse and outline the relationship of these three fantasies to foreign policies, assessing their ‘grip’ and discussing the crucial problem of the role of fantasy in the articulation of foreign policy.

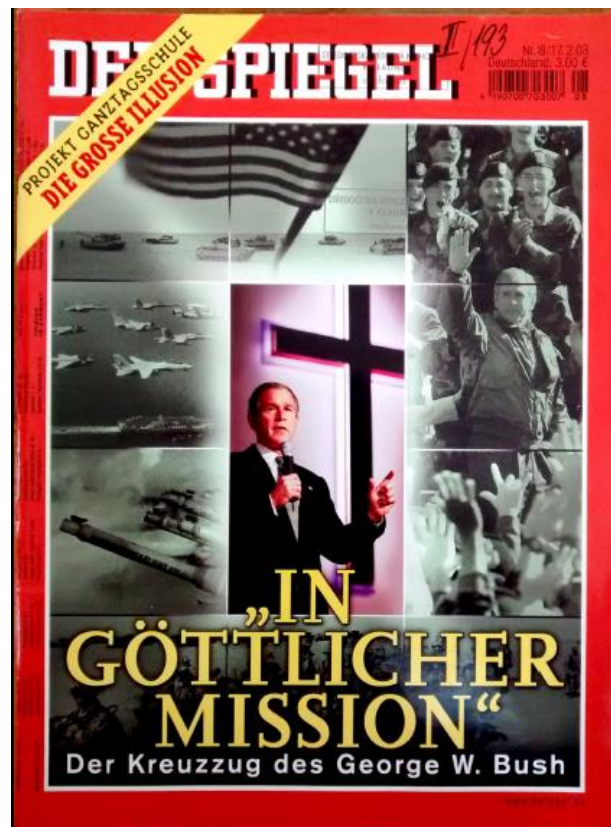
### **Imperial crusade and Armageddon on the Tigris: Fantasising ‘American war’**

There were two key fantasies supporting the anti-war case. The first of them focused on George W. Bush and his aides in particular, but also on the United States in general. It drew on anti-American discourses going back to the social movements of the 1960s and the opposition to the war in Vietnam. This fantasy concentrated on a variety of American subjects, highlighting the excessive enjoyment they were supposed to obtain from religious zeal or imperial arrogance. The second fantasy was built around the construction of ‘war’ as the ultimate evil and theft of enjoyment that affects large numbers of innocent people. This narrative relied on the history of Germany’s peace movements. The two fantasies coincided in the horrific scenario of ‘American war’, even to the extent that it is often difficult to differentiate between them (which is also why I discuss them in one section). In this articulation, it is the ‘American war’ that prevents the full enjoyment of the imaginary ‘UN

Charter world', in which states and peoples would coexist in peace and harmony and Germany would reach a complete identity. Opposing the 'American war' then plays the role of reaching the *objet petit a*, as it promises to lead us to the beatific future. These fantasies were closely intertwined with the anti-American hegemonic project and its particular rearticulation of the three social logics, whose discursive form they supported by projecting affective force on signifiers like 'war', 'Bush' or 'America'. In their clearest forms, the fantasies were present in the language of the PDS and in *Der Spiegel*.

The America-centred fantasy combined religion and imperialist militarism as the two sources of the unrestrained enjoyment that different American subjects were supposed to obtain. An excessive attachment to religion was linked above all to the person of George W. Bush. "It is no secret that he is full of religiously-fed missionary zeal [...]. Since 11 September [...] he understands himself a tool of God." (Koydl 2002) Clearly, here it is not religion itself that makes this narrative a fantasmatic one. There is nothing inherently wrong about Christianity in politics – after all it is the Christian Democrats that are the most successful German party. It is rather the way Bush is enjoying himself, the fact that he is *full of zeal* and that he claims a direct access to God. Bush believes that "for Presidency he was chosen by God, he does foreign policy with the authority of God behind himself." (Doerry et al. 2003: 66) Therefore, Bush is a 'fundamentalist' (ibid.) and, evoking the religious excesses of the Middle Ages, the planned war in Iraq would be a 'crusade' (Beste et al. 2002a: 155, Hoyng and Spörl 2003: 91). These articulations were best condensed by the *Der Spiegel* cover from 17 February 2003, showing Bush speaking in front of a large cross and accompanying this portrait with images of the military and headlines "ON A DIVINE MISSION" and "The crusade of George W. Bush".





*"On a Divine Mission", Der Spiegel, 17.2.2003*

Bush's religious fervour and the 'Christian fundamentalist' milieu of his voters (Doerry et al. 2003: 66) were further reinforced by portraying the president and the 'ordinary Americans' as simple, if not outright stupid. It was often done through the figure of the 'cowboy', reproduced in pictures of Bush dressed in casual clothing and a cowboy hat, driving a jeep on his ranch. As the German writer Martin Walser put it, "President Bush probably saw too many Westerns in his childhood and youth. And just like in a second-rate Western, he now acts as the sheriff, who is nothing but good – the enemy is nothing but evil." (in BILD 2003g) Bush's alleged simplicity was further highlighted by constructing him as taking matters personally and not being able to capture the complexities of world politics. "Russia is good, Vladimir [Putin] a pal, Iraq is evil and Saddam Hussein 'the guy that tried to kill my dad' [...] Seen through Bush's eyes, world politics shrinks to family history." (Beste et al. 2002b: 140, similarly also Emcke et al. 2003: 98).

Articulation of religion and simplicity may indeed translate affect into somewhat distanced amusement and laughter, at a first sight suggesting a relaxation of the obsessive fantasmatic relation. The fact that Bush is being mocked, however, does not necessarily weaken the fantasy, especially when it is done in a genre designed for this purpose (caricatures, newspaper commentary). On the contrary, people are often mocked precisely with the help of fantasmatic tropes (think about anti-Semitic or homophobic jokes and caricatures),

thereby only reinforcing the respective fantasies by providing a socially acceptable channel for articulating the transgressive and the inappropriate. Such mockery thus only contributes to the fantasmatic closure, since it works as a way of translating affect into discourse by showing what could not be said when speaking ‘seriously’. Therefore, laughter turns bitter when we, provided we are captured by the anti-American fantasy, ‘realise’ that the cowboyish silliness makes Bush even more dangerous, since cowboys are indeed known for shooting from the hip. Broadening the scope of the always already socially constructed emotional responses into which the extra-discursive affect can be translated in fact only increases the likelihood that affect will be invested and that the relationship to Bush and America will be a fantasmatic one.

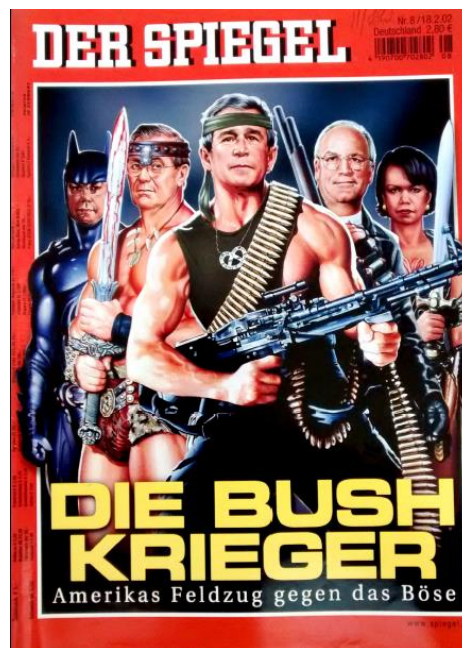
The second aspect of anti-American fantasising revolved around the notions of imperialism and militarism. Americans were portrayed as enjoying themselves excessively by imposing an exploitative rule on the world with their unrivalled military muscle, without concern for any other interests than their own, stealing everyone else’s enjoyment epitomised in ‘objects’ like equal status, sovereign rights or natural resources. In this fantasy, the militarised ‘imperial America’ acted as ‘masters of the world’ and displayed ‘the old arrogance of a great power’ (Beste et al. 2002a: 154-156) as well as an “unsavoury blend of nationalism, a claim on world domination and a conception of religious mission” (Wolfgang Gehrcke in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2002a: 21786). These depictions were linked especially to the ‘fundamentalists of power’ Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld (Hoyng and Spörl 2003: 99). In a typically fantasmatic excess that compares the US administration to Latin American military dictatorships and transfers our affective disapproval of the latter to the former, these people even constituted ‘the Bush junta’ (Emcke and Spörl 2003b: 122), or “a crazed junta, which apparently seized power in Washington” (Fichtner et al. 2003: 130).

The trope of militarism was particularly strong in visuals, suggesting that US power and identity were all about the military and, indeed, that the Americans *liked* their military and could not wait to use it. The majority of images coded as ‘Bush’ and ‘US’ also include depictions of ‘soldiers’ or ‘weapons’: US soldiers listening to Bush’s speeches or practicing in the desert, an aircraft carrier with men lined up so as to create the ‘war-mongering’ messages “READY NOW” and “9-11 LET’S ROLL”, a US tank in the desert with “ALL THE WAY TO BAGHDAD” written on its barrel.<sup>36</sup> One *Der Spiegel* cover offered “THE BUSH WARRIORS” as the title and depicted the US leadership as superheroes: Bush as Rambo holding a machine gun and a bullet belt wrapped around his body, Powell as Batman,

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<sup>36</sup> I used the code ‘soldiers’ for 8 of the 15 instances of ‘Bush’ and 14 of the 25 occurrences of ‘US’, while ‘weapons’ were noted 6 (‘Bush’) and 15 times (‘US’) respectively. See Appendix for further details.

Rumsfeld as Conan the Barbarian with a sword, Cheney and Rice (whose superhero identity I cannot establish) with a shotgun and a sword respectively. There were caricatures portraying Rumsfeld as a fully equipped soldier (Benedek 2003) or putting Bush in a tank (Mohr 2003b). Once again, some of these depictions indeed provoke amusement or laughter, since they are meant to make their targets look silly. However, there is simultaneously the horrific aspect of Rambo or Conan the Barbarian in command of the biggest army in the world. Different emotional responses may be provoked, but that only increases the likelihood that affect will be invested.



*"The Bush Warriors", Der Spiegel, 18.2.2002*



Nordatlantische Route

SZ-Zeichnung: Gabor Benedek

*"The North Atlantic route", SZ, 11.2.2003*

The construction of America in terms of imperialism was sometimes simplified to the extent that the Iraq crisis was seen as a cynical play for access to oil, ‘the fuel of the war’ (Emcke et al. 2003: 94), in which the militarist enjoyment is combined with that of economic exploitation. This was best captured by the *Der Spiegel* cover from 13 January 2003, showing an adaption of the American flag, in which a machine gun and a fuel pistol were crossed over each of the stars. This image was accompanied by a large print “BLOOD FOR OIL” and somewhat smaller “WHAT IRAQ IS REALLY ABOUT”. In the lead article of the issue, it was the “gigantic oil reserves” that constituted the “actual reason for the growing danger of war in the Persian Gulf” (von Ilseman et al. 2003: 86). A link to the oil industry was established through the professional past of members of the US administration, including Bush, Cheney and Rice, hinting at the enjoyment of the few that was the ‘true’ reason for the suffering of the many. “No one needs to explain to this crew anything about the importance of the black gold.” (Emcke et al. 2003: 100) Bush and his team were thus in fact not following the interest of the American people, as Oskar Lafontaine argued in his regular *BILD* column, but rather the ‘imperial interests’ of the American ‘plutocracy’. “The American people does not want the Iraq War. Arms, oil and finance industry profits from it.” (Lafontaine 2003)



“Blood for Oil”, *Der Spiegel*, 13.1.2003

The two core aspects of the fantasmatic constructions of America demonstrate that fantasies are often contradictory. Just like immigrants can be fantasised as stealing jobs and living off benefits simultaneously, Americans could be portrayed as both simple-minded religious

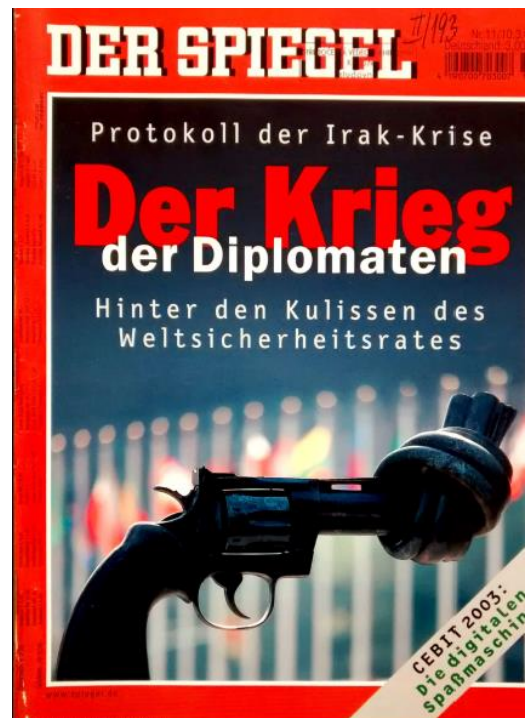
fanatics and cold-blooded imperialists. Most often this contradiction went unacknowledged. Occasionally, it was elevated from the individual level (e.g. Bush as possessing contradictory traits) through a ‘division of labour’ approach, linking each of the aspects to different people, e.g. by contrasting Bush’s ‘radicalism of faith’ to Rumsfeld and Cheney, who “use the religious zeal of their president, his conversion craze, for their most earthly objectives.” (Hoyng and Spörl 2003: 99) Whichever way prevails in a particular articulation, both demonstrate exactly the same point: contradictions do not destabilise fantasies, because fantasies work on the level of affect, not of logical consistency or correspondence with ‘consensus reality’ (Glynos 2014). And it only leads to us channelling even more of the paradoxical “pleasure in displeasure, satisfaction in dissatisfaction” (Stavrakakis 2007: 78) to despising or hating the US government if they are both simple-minded fanatics and cold-blooded imperialists.

The second fantasy focused on ‘war’. Its appeal stemmed already from the strong affective baggage the signifier ‘war’ holds in the German context. ‘War’ scares, but also attracts. The way *Der Spiegel* worked with this signifier on its covers is illustrative of this. ‘War’ featured on three of the eight covers related to the Iraq crisis. The cover of the issue from 9 September 2002 is unusually stripped down of almost all visual elements, reducing the image to black and white letters on a red background. “The war” (*Der Krieg*) is printed in as big a font as possible and located in the centre of the page. It is accompanied with a much smaller “USA against Iraq” on the top and a similarly styled “announced” (*angekündigte*), which is inserted between ‘Der’ and ‘Krieg’. Importantly, these two other headlines have a secondary status to ‘the war’. They are smaller and appear to be in a different layer, since “Der Krieg” is slightly blurred, creating the effect of being deeper in the background. A step back from the image shows the hierarchy of the messages and the centrality of ‘the war’ as an almost self-serving signifier; as a message approaching us from somewhere in the deep. Interestingly, a similar visual effect was repeated also on the cover from 10 March 2003, again demonstrating the force of ‘the war’.





"The war", *Der Spiegel*, 9.9.2002



"The war of diplomats", *Der Spiegel*, 10.3.2003

In the narrative aspect, it was the horrific course and consequences of war that were central and depicted in vivid detail, even though the war was yet to start and it was wholly uncertain how it would look like. *Der Spiegel* resorted to one of the darkest biblical metaphors, predicting an 'Armageddon on the Tigris' (Widmann 2003: 107). "3000 Bombs rain on Baghdad", reported *BILD* in the present tense and in a title stretching across two of the already very large pages (BILD 2003f), even though the attack had yet to begin. "Iraq will become a fire inferno," stated another headline on the same page (ibid.) Common were also accounts of the excessive suffering that was about to be brought onto the people of Iraq. The war would constitute 'mass murder', Petra Pau of the PDS argued (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003f: 2747). Her party colleague Gesine Löttsch predicted that it "will cost thousands of people their lives, [will] ruin millions of people their health and [will] deprive the poorest of the poor of their possessions." (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003g: 2896) Citing a UN report, an *SZ* piece maintained that a war in Iraq would bring "hundreds of thousands of refugees and wounded, millions of starving and a land broken to pieces" (Ulrich 2003). The darkest scenario was offered by Wolfgang Gehrcke (PDS), who argued that "a war against Iraq can expand to a new world war, to a Third World War" (in Deutscher Bundestag 2002b: 25614).

Horrific consequences were implied also through the use of historical metaphors pointing to what is broadly seen as particularly nasty, unsuccessful or pointless examples of warfare. A comparison was drawn between Iraq and Vietnam (von Ilseman and Zand 2002: 111, Fichtner et al. 2003: 148), one that was reproduced also in the association of Bush and the

Americans more generally with the pop-cultural character of Rambo. The battle of Baghdad was depicted as a possible ‘Saddamgrad’ (Widmann 2003: 107), mobilising tropes related to the ultimately horrific experience of Stalingrad in particular and World War II in general. The debate over Iraq was also conducted in parallel to the exposed discussion about Germans as World War II victims, initiated by the historian Jörg Friedrich’s account of the bombing of German cities in *The Fire (Der Brand)* and Günter Grass’s novel *Crabwalk (Im Krebsgang)*, both published in 2002. This debate was led in the broader inter-text, with only occasional traces in my samples, but, as Zehfuss (2007) demonstrates, it provided a context for the discussion of Iraq, including a reservoir of especially horrific images of warfare.

However, was the war in Iraq actually not a terrible thing that cost many people their lives and led to still ongoing violence? The attack has of course fulfilled too many of the fears presented here. It is important to remind, nevertheless, that fantasy is not a lie or false consciousness that would stand in opposition to ‘reality’ (Žižek 1989). It does not mask ‘reality’, but the lack in it, the ultimate lack of meaning. What matters in fantasies is thus not correspondence with some ‘external’ or ‘objective’ ‘realities’, but their particular effect on discourse. What is important is the *excessively* horrific nature of the constructions: that the worst historical examples are mobilised, such as Stalingrad and Vietnam; that the story is being told through signifiers like ‘Armageddon’ and ‘inferno’; that it is ‘millions’ of people who would suffer. In this sense, the excessive horror of this ‘double-caf’ warfare is a mirror image of the excessive cleanness of the ‘decaf warfare’ (Žižek 2004a) of ‘surgical strikes’, since both of them impose affectively-laden closure on the necessarily unpredictable futures.

The articulation of the two fantasies in the notion of ‘American war’ bears resemblance to the anti-war political project and certainly draws upon the resources of above all the social logic of peaceful resolution. The fantasies are not only intertwined with these discursive patterns, but they also add something important to them. They do not only reaffirm that ‘war is bad’, but they channel affect behind this articulation by portraying the horrors of ‘war’ in vivid detail and in the darkest possible colours, suspending any doubt regardless of what the war will look like before it has even started. They do not only restate that the US support war, but they also show how Bush or the Americans in general use war to exercise their enjoyment, one that is gained from missionary zeal, imperial domination or economic exploitation. Thereby, fantasies postulate ‘war’ and Germany’s support thereof as the horrific scenario, in which Germany’s very identities are under threat. When the core of ‘who we are’ is in danger, especially because of the actions of ‘religious cowboys’ and ‘ruthless imperialists’ that can only result in an ‘Armageddon’ or a ‘Saddamgrad’, it is no surprise that positions are formulated as uncompromising and the debates between them are emotional and existential. In fact, one can hardly speak about a ‘debate’ any more, since

there is little to argue about. For those captured by the fantasmatic articulation of ‘American war’, there is little doubt that Germany must oppose it. Discursive closure is imposed and uncomfortable questions, e.g. regarding the humanitarian consequences of Saddam Hussein remaining in power, are suspended.

### **Ghosts of the past: Fantasising Germany’s ‘special path’**

The second fantasy offered a particular construction of Germany’s history, typically expressed through another affectively-laden signifier: *Sonderweg*. Translated as ‘special path’, *Sonderweg* is a historiographical concept that tracks the woes of the Wilhelmine Empire and the Third Reich in the disjuncture between economic, societal and political modernisations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to this line of thought, Germany deviated from ‘the West’ in her failure to fully embrace liberal-democratic institutions, which led to the rise of nationalism, militarism and National Socialism. In political language, *Sonderweg* functions as an ultimately negative term. As the former chancellor Helmut Kohl put it in the *BILD*, in Iraq it was explicitly ‘existential’ that “[t]here must never again be a German *Sonderweg*” (in *BILD* 2003a). A circular narrative of history is built around the signifier. Difference from ‘the West’, as embodied above all by the United States in the case of Iraq, is portrayed as threatening with the return of the horrific past. Unity with and integration within ‘the West’ then serves as the *objet petit a*, promising the full enjoyment of redemption for the sins of the past and an equal status in the world. The fantasy thus channelled affect above all behind the central signifiers of the anti-isolation hegemonic project, such as ‘isolation’, ‘alone’ or ‘offside’ and the key elements of the logic of international communities.

Interestingly, the beatific aspect of the scenario was also situated in the past, this time in the Bonn Republic and its supposedly virtuous foreign policies (directing affective investment also to the pole of ‘tradition’ of the anti-isolation project). To cite Michael Glos (CSU): “In the 57 years that have passed since the total defeat in the Second World War, Germany has, thanks to the policies of wise statesmen, developed into an equal, valued partner. We belong to the Western community of values.” (in *Deutscher Bundestag* 2003d: 1891) Even though Glos switches to the present tense in the last sentence, the status of ‘an equal, valued partner’ is never fully achieved, it is always already in the past or in the future and has to be constantly fought for (this is the very logic of the *objet petit a*). Glos himself adds that “for a nation, from which the Holocaust has originated [...], [belonging to the West and an equal status are] not taken for granted.” (ibid.) In the *Sonderweg* fantasy, the present is therefore a site of a struggle between the excessively horrific and excessively beatific versions of the past for which of them will define the future. This fantasy is to a large extent a nostalgic one,

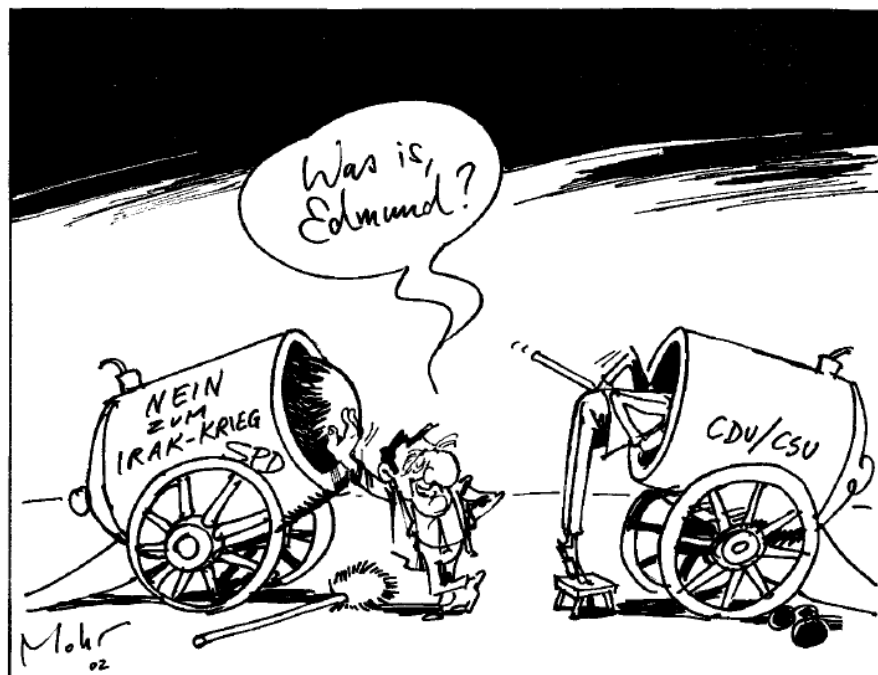


lamenting the imaginary enjoyment of the ‘good old days’. Therefore, it is not surprising, that it was articulated mostly in the conservative circles of the CDU/CSU, *FAZ* and *BILD*.

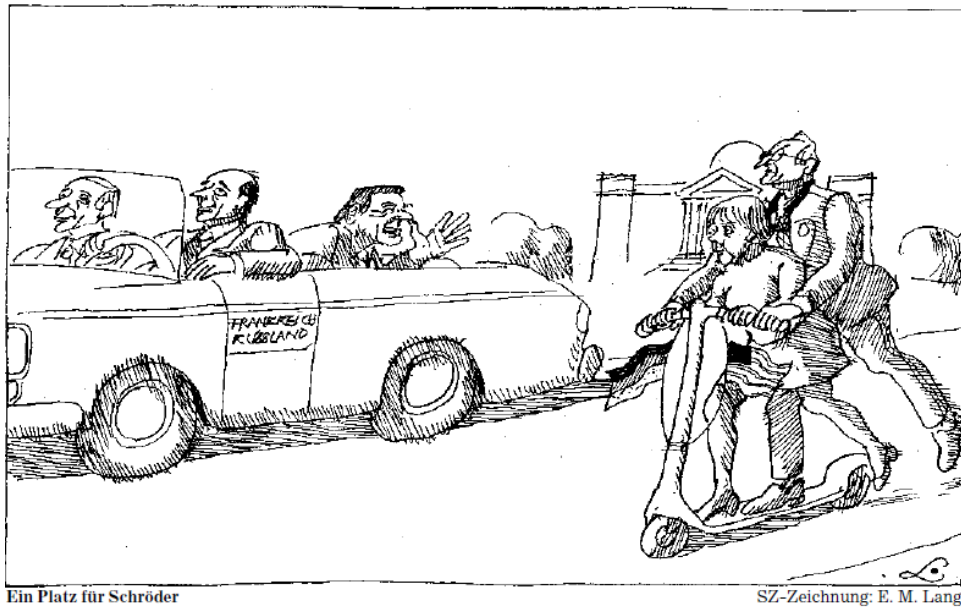
To project the horrific construction of the past onto the present, parallels were made between the Federal Republic under the red-green coalition and the German Empire under Wilhelm II, implying the scenario of the return of Germany’s nationalist hubris. This was building on broader discourses, including certain versions of the normalisation thesis, which compared the unification of 1990 to the unification of 1871. The at the time still very recent return of the capital to Berlin, including the reconvening of the Bundestag in the historical Reichstag building (1999), and the talk of the ostensibly new epoch of ‘the Berlin Republic’ provided a favourable context for the Wilhelmine theme. In the press, Schröder was directly compared to the emperor. “Schröder does his peace policy like a Kaiser Wilhelm converted from militarism. He is a pacifist in a spiked helmet (*Pickelhaubenpazifist*).” (Prantl 2003a) The ‘warning [of] Wilhelm II’, however, applied also to Fischer, since ‘both regents of the red-green coalition’ were displaying similar ‘ego-nationalism’ (Zastrow 2003). Articulating the fantasmatic tropes as a rhetorical question, CDU’s foreign policy speaker Friedbert Pflüger asked: “Are we on the way back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the construction of axes, concerts of powers, politics of balance, German way [...]?” (Pflüger 2003b, 2003c)

Sometimes, the implications of *Sonderweg* were constructed with the even darker references to Nazism, World War II and the Holocaust. *BILD* ran a series of articles on German-American relations, which was situated explicitly in the context of the crisis between the two governments (for which Schröder was almost uniformly blamed by *BILD*’s commentators). The introduction to the first piece went: “The historian Prof. Arnulf Baring (70) writes in *BILD* why we Germans need America so desperately. Today: How the ‘German Sonderweg’ pushed us to National Socialism.” (Baring 2003a) The fantasmatic aspects are again in the excess – Americans are needed *so desperately*, because the other, and probably only other, option is the *Sonderweg* back to the Third Reich. By breaking away from the United States and the (supposed) tradition, the red-green government is stealing the enjoyment of escaping the horrors of the past by learning its ‘lessons’ and endangers the very core of German identities. Through the actions of Schröder and Fischer, “[t]he configuration of the lessons from war and Auschwitz in the German post-war reason of state will be [...] discretely disposed of.” (Zastrow 2003) The historical trajectory of the Bonn Republic will be undone and “the political capital will be gambled away, which was accumulated over the past 50 years” (Nm 2002). Indeed, “five decades of German foreign policy already lie in ruins” (Kohler 2003).

The enjoyment stolen by breaking the ‘tradition’ reappears in the portrayal of the ‘thieves’, especially Schröder, as actually enjoying themselves while doing the ‘damage’. Not only that the government destroys Germany’s very identity; it *likes* doing so. It is while ‘smiling coldly’ that “special paths are raised to a diplomatic principle” (Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg in Deutscher Bundestag 2003b: 1858). It is with ‘poisonous joy’ that some of the Greens “welcome the crash with Washington” (Lohse 2003a). This aspect is most visible in the caricatures, where Schröder is the most common target, appearing on eleven of the thirty caricatures in my sample. In five of these appearances, enjoyment is clearly discernible. In one of them, Schröder is shown with an amused grin, putting a ball into a canon with the messages “NO TO IRAQ WAR” and “SPD”, teasing the rival candidate Edmund Stoiber, whose cannon is empty as he does not seem to find ammunition for the elections (Mohr 2002). Elsewhere, a good-humoured Schröder is sitting in a limousine with two other men, presumably Chirac and Putin because of the signs “FRANCE” and “RUSSIA” (Lang 2003b). He is thumbing his nose at Merkel and Stoiber, who ride a kick scooter with German and American flags on it.



“What’s up, Edmund?”, FAZ, 13.9.2002



Ein Platz für Schröder

SZ-Zeichnung: E. M. Lang

"A place for Schröder", SZ, 12.2.2003

Similarly to the previous case, the *Sonderweg* fantasy is also closely intertwined with one equivalential project, only this time it is the anti-isolation discourse and the internationalist principles upon which it relies. And just like in the previous case, the fantasy also adds the affective force to these articulations by reinforcing them with excessively horrific and beatific tropes. In *Sonderweg*, the debate about Iraq is transformed into a heroic battle over which version of Germany's past will define the future. The government is portrayed as leading Germany back to the dark era of Wilhelmine nationalism or even the Third Reich and actually enjoying doing all this 'damage'. Indeed, this makes it imperative to oppose the government with all vigour, since the very core of 'being German' is at stake, which is indeed not only an existential, but also an emotional issue. This opposition then brings back the beatific alternative of returning to the desirable 'good old days' of the Bonn Republic, in which Germany's identity was supposedly complete. This fantasmatic desire for completeness is not only unfulfillable, as I have argued in detail earlier, but it, again, imposes closure on the discourse; one in which questions like the status of the 'evidence' against Iraq become secondary.

### **Cannibal and monster: Fantasising Saddam**

The third fantasy focused on Saddam Hussein, highlighting the 'abhorrent' personal characteristics of 'Saddam' (as he was often referred to), presenting his role as the obstacle to different beatific scenarios of fulfilment and posing his removal as the *objet petit a*. To 'Iraqi people', 'Saddam' was preventing the enjoyment of freedom, democracy or dignity.

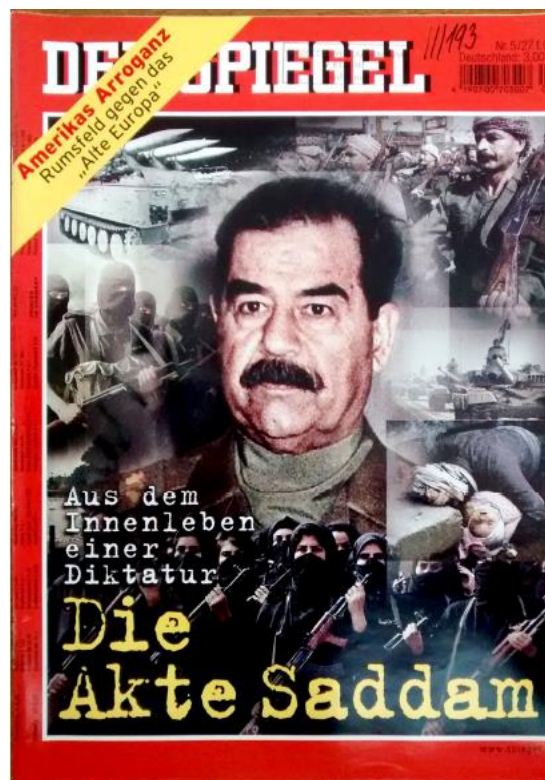
To the international community, including Germany, he blocked the achievement of a functioning international order by his defiance of the UN Security Council resolutions. While, there was no political project in which Saddam Hussein would play a central part, the fantasy still provided some support to the anti-isolation project by showing the urgency of getting rid of 'Saddam' and by channelling affect against the German government, whose actions were occasionally seen as helping Saddam Hussein. The fantasy was most salient in *BILD* and *Der Spiegel* and in some articulations of the right-wing opposition.

Saddam Hussein was constructed as a dictator with absolute power, closely relying on the familiar Orientalist imaginary (Said 1978, Grosrichard 1998). 'Saddam', who was even explicitly called 'the potentate from the Orient' (Fichtner 2003: 130), thus only temporarily occupied the position of the 'Oriental despot' in this centuries-old fantasy, colouring it with some particular features of his own. He was typically called a dictator, a 'tyrant of Tigris' (Spörl 2002: 146, Pollack 2003: 94). But he was not just an ordinary dictator, but 'a dictator of immeasurable wickedness' (Emcke and Spörl 2003b: 122), or even 'the most dangerous dictator in the world' (Gerd Müller in Deutscher Bundestag 2002g: 546). The names Saddam Hussein was given were innumerable, including 'monster' (Emcke and Spörl 2003b: 122, Friedbert Pflüger in Deutscher Bundestag 2002a: 21784), 'devil' (Wagner 2002) and 'cannibal' (Wagner 2003). An article in *BILD* concluded that "Saddam, the tyrant of Baghdad, is a beast, a riddle, a mass murderer and a man," driven by "paranoia, sadism, megalomania, aggression" (BILD 2003e). With respect to his mental state, however, 'Saddam' was both a madman driven by his passions and instincts, 'the lunatic of Baghdad' (Michalski 2003), and a cold-blooded Machiavellian. "He is no psychopath, but, on the contrary, calculates very coolly. He is gruesome and unscrupulous, an artist of survival, who does everything for the maintenance of his power." (American political psychologist Jarred Post cited in Emcke et al. 2003: 94) This contradiction, as I have argued before, is a typical feature of fantasy and it also allows a double dose of affective projection: 'Saddam' becomes even more repulsive, if he is both a psychopath beyond control and a cynical murderer.

Orientalism was coupled with dark images from Europe's past in the depictions of the cruelty of 'Saddam'. World War II was a particularly important resource again, only this time it was not the horrors of a 'war' or the vices of a 'special path' that were emphasised, but rather the construction of Saddam Hussein as equivalent with Hitler and Stalin. Through this equivalence, the affectivity that is projected on the signifiers 'Hitler' and 'Stalin', which are arguably two of the leading embodiments of evil in democratic discourses, is transferred to 'Saddam'. Curiously, historians' accounts were cited in parliamentary speeches to support these links. Using the words of the German scholar Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Friedbert Pflüger (CDU) called Saddam Hussein a 'genuine successor of Hitler' (in Deutscher

Bundestag 2002a: 21784). Michael Glos (CSU) quoted the American historian Jeffrey Herf: “As the first dictator since Hitler, Saddam unites in his policy elements of European fascism and Stalinism” (in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1893). In the words of *Der Spiegel*: “His cynical methods of rule and his ego-maniac understanding of power are reminiscent of the both bloodthirsty-totalitarian leaders [...], who exactly 60 years ago commanded their soldiers to the big slaughterhouse at the Volga.” (Widmann 2003: 106)

These resources were then utilised and developed in portrayals of Saddam Hussein’s aggressiveness and the horrors of his regime. Visually, this was done by the recurring trope of ‘Saddam’, usually with a grin, holding or even using various weapons – a rifle, a sword or a bazooka.<sup>37</sup> These images were condensed in the *Der Spiegel* cover from 27 January 2003. A portrait of ‘Saddam’ is in the centre, surrounded by images of mostly faceless soldiers from military parades (including the recurring picture of units of veiled women), tanks, rocket launchers and a dead woman embracing a baby (which refers to the use of chemical weapons to suppress the Shia and Kurdish rebellions of 1991). The collage is accompanied by the headlines “The Saddam Files” and “From the inner life of a dictatorship”. The cover marked the beginning of a series of richly illustrated articles on the atrocities of the Iraqi regime, which were published also in the following issues.



“The Saddam Files”, *Der Spiegel*, 27.1.2003

<sup>37</sup> Žižek (2004b: 2) also suggests that Saddam firing a weapon was one of the hegemonic images of the Iraq crisis.



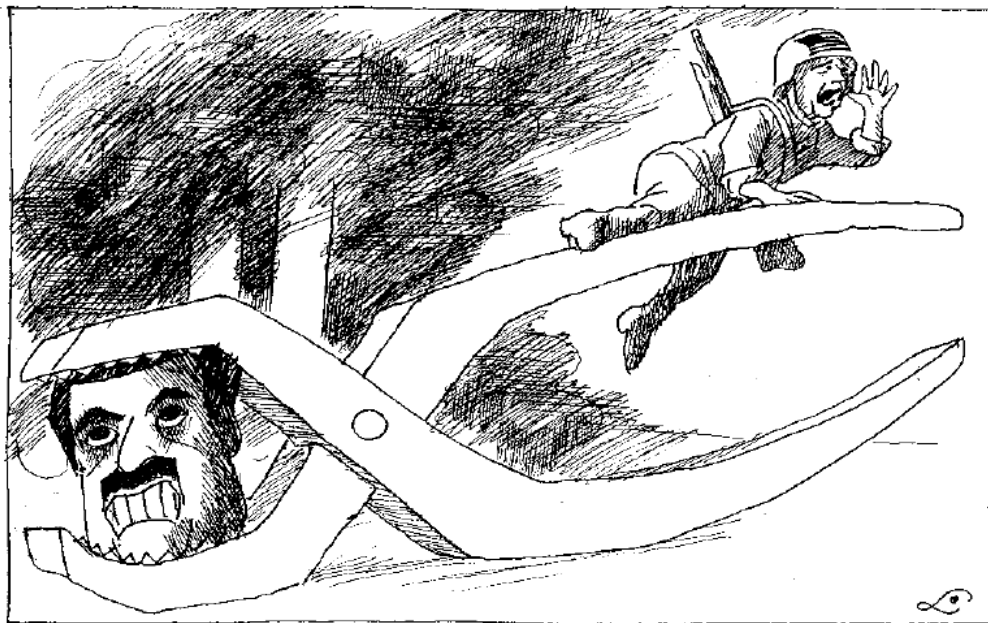
*"Saddam Hussein trains Bin Laden's fighters", BILD, 30.7.2002*

Colourful accounts of the wickedness and grotesque excesses of the 'dictator' were offered also in *BILD*: "He has been carrying a gun ever since he was twelve, killed a rival at a demonstration already as a youngster. [...] A minister, who disagreed with him in a meeting, Saddam shot with his own hand." (*BILD* 2002a) Similar constructions of bizarre and pointless cruelty were associated also with members of the ruling family. *BILD* further reported the 'gruesome way' in which Saddam's son Uday had supposedly killed one of his advisers. "On the order of Uday Hussein (38) a servant forced two litres of whisky down the man's throat – only because he had not appeared for a meeting! Saddam's son (considered exceptionally aggressive) was supposed to watch calmly." (adi 2002) Unsurprisingly, such articulations pointed to the excessive enjoyment of the Hussein family, enjoyment that was seen as stolen from the people of Iraq. Saddam Hussein 'loves violence and luxury', while he 'brutally tortures' his people with 'crucifixions, electric shocks, hydrochloric acid' (*BILD* 2003d). Corporeality and sexuality were often highlighted in these narrations, reinforcing the 'inappropriate' aspect of the fantasy: "Women, who had privately spoken against Saddam, were for weeks held naked in torture cellars, beaten, raped." (ibid.)

Bodily enjoyment was present also in visuals, which would typically show 'Saddam' with a grin. This was particularly clear in caricatures, where this was the case in five of the six portrayals of Saddam Hussein. One of them showed his head stuck in pliers, which were being closed by an American soldier with a desperate appearance, calling for help (as the



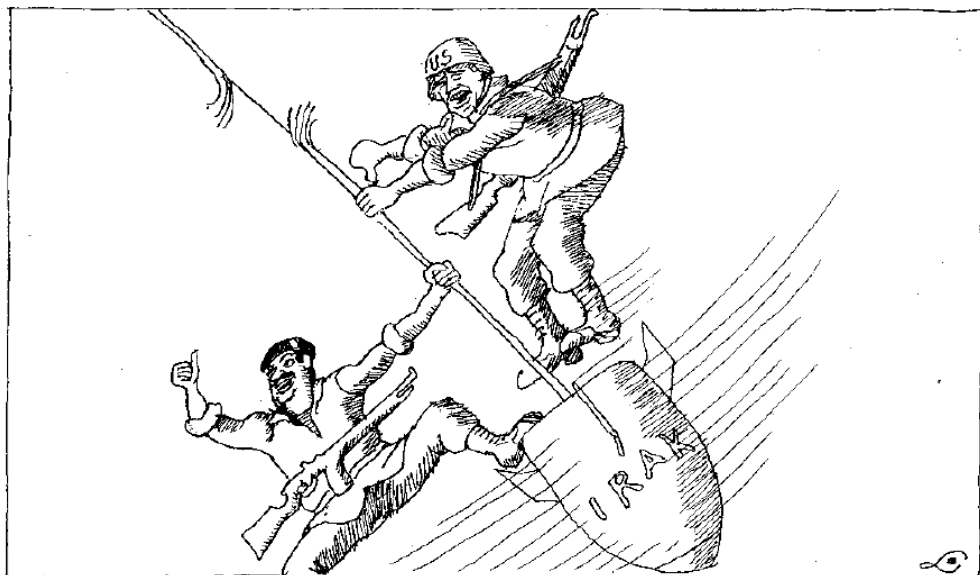
caption specifies). In the background, there is a silhouette of two towers veiled in smoke, hinting at Saddam's complicity with the attacks of 11 September 2001 (Lang 2002). In another one, Saddam is laughing and raising his thumb while swinging on a rope, which is just about to break. Also swinging is a US soldier, who, in contrast, appears to be desperate in the situation. The caption offers a rhyme that can be translated as "They are playing out time and that means / swinging until the rope tears" (Lang 2003a).



„Hilfe!“

SZ-Zeichnung: E. M. Lang

“Help!”, SZ, 12.9.2002



Sie schinden Zeit und dieses heißt:  
Schaukeln, bis der Faden reißt ...

SZ-Zeichnung: E.-M. Lang

“They are playing out time ...”, SZ, 29.1.2003

Importantly, such cruelties were not only isolated instances of Saddam Hussein's impulsive or mad character, but also a calculated and systematic method of rule. This is best described in an article from *Der Spiegel*, fittingly titled 'The System of Terror', which provides an illustration of the fantasmatic obsession with horrific details:

This is a regime, which gouges children's eyes out to extort confessions from parents and grandparents. This is a regime, which one at a time breaks all the foot bones of a two-year old girl to force her mother to disclose the residence of her husband. [...] This is a regime, which slowly sinks its victims in giant caldrons of acid to break their will or simply as a method of execution. This is a regime, which gives its victims electric shocks, above all on genitalia, and displays great creativity at this torture. (Pollack 2003: 94)

Therefore, the victims of Saddam and his regime were not only those directly abused, but really the 'Iraqi people' as a whole; the 'people', which Saddam "oppresses, rapes, murders and [...] literally gases with biological and chemical weapons." (Guido Westerwelle in Deutscher Bundestag 2003f: 2715)

Crucially, however, this fantasy is still Western, European and German. For it to function fully, 'Saddam' has to be blocking also the identity of 'us'. On one level, this relates to the element of 'our' identity that is constituted by the logic of international communities, which sanctions us not to stand by when people are being oppressed. On another level, this is done by the imminent danger that 'Saddam' poses also to 'us', which was also painted in excessively horrific terms: "Saddam Hussein threatens, with an arsenal of biological weapons, with terror commandos and carrier rockets, with anthrax pathogens, nerve gas and poxviruses, also Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt." (Gerd Müller in Deutscher Bundestag 2002g: 546) In this sense, the international community and Iraqi people are equivalent in their vulnerability of Saddam Hussein and they would equally enjoy his departure, which would lead to the recapturing of the *objet petit a* for all the different subjects.<sup>38</sup>

The evaluation of the 'Saddam' fantasy has to be paradoxical. On the one hand, it presented the most vivid descriptions and depictions. 'Saddam' was posited as a much more radical enemy and portrayed in notably darker colours than the obstacles in the two other fantasies, as personified above all by George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder respectively. Despite its most explicit and elaborate nature, on the other hand, this fantasy had comparatively lesser

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<sup>38</sup> The events after the fall of the regime then illustrate the necessary failure of the fantasy, since *objet petit a* cannot be reached by definition – if we get it, it was not the 'real' one. Instead of 'becoming itself' when Saddam was toppled, the 'Iraqi people' breaks into a number of heterogeneous groups at that very moment. Instead of enjoying the harmony, 'international community' is divided, weakened and with a whole lot of new issues to face.



political effects, since there was no political project that would be articulated chiefly around the opposition to Saddam Hussein. In fact, this fantasy would support the US constructions of the 'axis of evil', which, however, played at best a marginal role in the German discourse. The political effects of this fantasy were thus discernible only in its less direct relationship to the anti-isolation project, since it could rally affective support with identifications against the government. This support, however, was reserved only for some of the more radical articulations within the project, which portrayed the German government as inadvertently helping, or at least ignoring the vices of Saddam Hussein. In sum, while the fantasmatic construction of 'Saddam' certainly channelled rather large amounts of affect into the discourse, this affect was only partially translated into the support of particular political positions.

### **Foreign policy and the logic of fantasy**

Now that I have mapped the three most important fantasies from the materials in which they could be found in their strongest and clearest versions, most importantly the media arena, I can finally discuss the central problem: how can it be demonstrated that fantasies influence foreign policy? As I have already hinted at multiple occasions, the answer is to be found in the way how fantasies are articulated with other discursive resources in the official discourse. For the sake of clarity, it is important to start by explicating what is *not* the argument. I do not claim any access to whatever Schröder, Fischer or anybody else thought, felt or experienced. Not only is there no way to get inside another person's body, but this also cannot be the point. Discourse theory and psychoanalysis do not deal with the 'inner' psyche of individuals, but with the *social* constitution of subjects and I am analysing foreign policy as a *social* practice. Even if we somehow managed to know another person's 'inner' thoughts and feelings, these would neither have to correspond with the actions through which they relate to the social world, nor would they have to translate into the collectively enacted policies. Therefore, I am *not* trying to show that policies result from the presence of one or more fantasies in the mind of a policy-maker. Instead, my focus is on the *social* circulation of discourse and affect, through which subjectivities are constructed and policies performed. This enables the examination of three ways of how fantasies influence foreign policies, which are best understood as successive steps.

First, fantasies provide a context for the contingent and unpredictable decision-making. Policies are decided and implemented from within the discourse, in which fantasies are a source of largely implicit intertextual links, one that is particular for its affectivity. They are the 'obscene supplement' to the otherwise 'rational' arguments (Žižek 1997), e.g. of

rejecting the war because of the (at that time allegedly) insufficient proof of the Iraq-WMD connection, or of granting the US overflight rights because of (supposed) treaty obligations. The mapping of this context is exactly what I did in the previous sections. This constitutes a legitimate account in itself, one that relies on a considerably high degree of what can be shown in textual and pictorial evidence, as the argument is simply that fantasies were present in the discourse. However, while the gap between identifiable discursive structures, including fantasies, and the irreducible ‘madness’ aspect in policy decisions can never be closed completely, there are still two more steps how to narrow it.

Second, it may be possible to identify fantasmatic articulations also in the language of the politicians in charge of foreign policy decisions, often even in the very same texts that construct policies. The best site for finding fantasies is still the unofficial domain, but often it is also the case that “politicians [are] drawing on elements of this [unofficial discourse] in more measured terms to gain support for the policy positions they adopt” (Hawkins 2015: 149). If I could show that elements of fantasies were used to present and explain policies, I could also argue that the relationship between the two was much closer. This would help me show how politicians directly contributed to the circulation of affect by including it in their privileged discourses. The challenge for such explanation is that fantasies typically contain transgressive and inappropriate aspects, which are usually ‘between the lines’. While detailed elaborations of fantasy narratives are indeed rare, I will show that fantasmatic clues can still be found in the policy discourse when it is juxtaposed with the broader intertext.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, less can be shown and more has to be interpreted here, inviting a greater degree of judgement.

The third step develops the previous argument by asking for the extent of the fantasmatic grip, which can be found in the subjective attachment to fantasies and defines the operation of the *logic* of fantasy. As I have argued earlier, the functioning of the logic of fantasy can be inferred from the degree of closure in discourse. Therefore, even this does not involve getting inside people’s heads. In assessing attachment, I am not asking what subjects felt, but rather what they performed, since it is only through performance that affect gets translated into discourse and can achieve social effects. I may be in terrible pain, but other people will not react – not only by words and actions, but also by feelings of shock or compassion –

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<sup>39</sup> This is not to say that politicians do not articulate fantasies, but rather that their language is generally more measured in degree because of the social rules attached to the subject position of ‘politician’, which would probably highlight the aspect of ‘rationality’. One possible reason is the general liberal-modernist tendency to ‘keep emotions out’ of the public sphere. Mouffe (2000) argues that this is particularly strong among those mainstream politicians, who aspire to attract the ‘median voter’ by presenting themselves as offering ‘rational’ solutions which are not only ‘above emotion’, but also ‘beyond ideology’. This would apply for most of Germany’s politicians at the time of my interest (with the exception of PDS and some fringe groups), and especially for those keen to present themselves as *Neue Mitte* (‘new middle’) like Schröder, or *Realo* (‘realist’) like Fischer.

unless I show it. And conversely, social effects of bringing pain into discourse will be the same even if I am actually not in pain at all, provided I am faking it well enough. Apart from their hidden mental aspect, which is inaccessible in this type of analysis, fantasy, crucially, also has a discursive and practical, ‘radically intersubjective character’ (Žižek 1997: 8). From the perspective of political and social significance, it does not matter whether we really believe it, but rather whether we act as if we do (Žižek 1989: 29-36). Therefore, in a move that requires an even larger degree of judgement, I will also assess the grip of fantasies from the way closure was enacted by those in charge of deciding foreign policy. With this in mind, let me now examine the official policy discourse of the German government with focus on the second and the third steps, that is whether fantasies were present and whether the logic of fantasy was operative in official discourses.

The presence of the anti-war hegemonic project in the official discourse suggests that we should first look for elements of the fantasies of ‘American war’. As for the ‘war’ aspect, the hints were often rather visible. Schröder implicitly linked Iraq to World War II, referring to the ‘experience of and with war’ that “entrenched itself deeply in the consciousness of the [German] people” (Schröder 2003e:25). Fischer drew the parallel between Iraq and Vietnam (Fischer 2002e: 9). ‘War’ was also presented in its most horrific aspects: “War means that probably very many innocent people must die, [or] be affected in terrible ways.” (Fischer 2003e: 28) It would have ‘catastrophic humanitarian consequences’ and bring “endless suffering to countless innocent people” (Fischer 2003g: 4). In Schröder’s words, “thousands of people will suffer terribly” (Schröder 2003d: 21), since war “will bring certain death to thousands of innocent children, women and men” (Schröder 2003c: 12). Schröder also admitted his own emotional response, thereby reproducing the affectivity of the discourse from his position of authority: “I am moved, that in my position I am united with a great majority of our people, with a majority in the Security Council and a majority of all peoples. [...] The logic of war prevailed over the chances of peace. Thousands of people will have to suffer terribly.” (Schröder 2003d: 21, very similar also Schröder 2003c) This emotional response is one of the indicators suggesting that the logic of fantasy was operative here and that the ‘war’ fantasy exercised a rather strong grip over the official discourse. This conclusion is further supported by the repetition and insistence of the supposedly unavoidable horrors of war and by the notion of ‘no alternative’ as epitomised in the much repeated line that whatever happens, Germany will not participate in war.

With the ‘America’ aspect, at a first sight there were few of the clearly socially inappropriate references to religious fanatics, gung-ho cowboys or ruthless imperialists. These were even rejected occasionally, e.g. when Fischer insisted that “the United States are no empire” (Fischer 2003i). However, there were still hints and euphemisms. The most common of them

was the reference to the US policies as ‘adventures’, through which Schröder qualified his promise of ‘unlimited solidarity’ (Schröder 2002b). The negatively-laden notion of ‘adventures’ implies a certain view of those who would want to undertake them, one that is arguably much closer to ‘crusaders’ or ‘cowboys’ than to the official constructions of the American leadership as ‘friends’. Schröder also points in this direction in his construction of the US leadership in his *New York Times* interview, saying that “consultation cannot mean that I get a phone call two hours in advance only to be told, ‘We’re going in.’” (Schröder 2002e) Again, those who call two hours in advance only to announce their ‘going in’ appear much more like ‘cowboys’ and ‘imperialists’ than like equal partners. The ‘adventures’ soundbite was repeated not only by the chancellor, but also by the foreign and defence ministers (Fischer 2002g: 11, Struck 2002a: 22). This suggests that the logic of fantasy was operative, not only because of the somewhat obsessive repetition of the particular signifier, but also because of the closure brought by portraying US policy as an ‘adventure’.<sup>40</sup>

Fantasies of ‘America’ and ‘war’ were then entangled in descriptions of the horrific consequences of attacking Iraq. The Middle East would ‘explode’ and be swept by a ‘conflagration’ (Fischer 2002f, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul cited in Schröder 2002d). In the global context, the most common horrific consequence would be the provoking of a ‘clash of civilisations’, ‘battle of cultures’ and ‘Islamisation’ through the pursuit of a ‘campaign of the West’ (Fischer 2002l, 2003a, Schröder in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1878). “The great fear is that this will turn into a war of civilisation and, in the medium term, to Islamisation of the Arab-Muslim world with fatal consequences from the terrorism point of view.” (Fischer in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1886) The whole fantasmatic sequence of triggering the horrific scenario of terrorism driven by a clash of civilisation is best visible in the following statement: “If we now declared the process of the disarmament of Iraq and the political pacification failed, we would, I am afraid, grant [...] confirmation to fanatics, who prophesise this confrontation of cultures and want to bomb it into being with their disgraceful attacks.” (Schröder in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1878)

The considerable grip the fantasies of ‘America’ and ‘war’ exercised over the official discourse further explains the rhetorical opposition to the Iraq war and the diplomatic practices that sought to prevent it. These fantasies supported the anti-war hegemonic project,

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<sup>40</sup> Intriguingly, the more implicit and restrained they were at the time, the more forcefully German politicians articulated this fantasy in their memoirs. To add merely a few examples referring to Bush himself, Struck called the president a ‘Western holy warrior’ driven by ‘evangelical craze’ (2010: 96-97). Volmer referred to him as a ‘fundamentalist holy warrior from Texas’, surrounded by the ‘crusaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ (2013: 137, 156). Fischer spoke about the ‘loss of the sense of reality’ and ‘parting from reality in the foreign policy of George W. Bush’ (2011: 93-94). Once again, this does not prove that politicians thought and felt this way at the time. However, it further alerts us to the tension between the ‘rational’ arguments and the hints at ‘adventures’, which were generally surrounded by silence in the official discourse.

in particular by channelling affect towards its central signifiers, especially in their negative construction of 'war' and 'America'. The anti-war hegemonic project was thus not constructed only on the level of argumentation, but also on the level of the affective 'gut feeling', as something that should also provoke 'instinctive reaction', to use Fischer's own words accounting for his response to the American push for war (Fischer 2011: 91). Opposing the 'American war' was thus not only something that had to be done on the grounds of international law or the unpredictable consequences of the attack, but also simply because the fantasmatic closure allowed little alternatives to the unconditional rejection of the 'adventures' of 'American cowboys'.

However, not all policies were articulated from within the anti-war project. Indeed, many would hardly fit in it, since providing the US with logistical support or sending military equipment to Turkey and Israel indeed facilitated the 'adventure' of the Iraq war. I have shown that these policies were constructed through the differentiation between the 'Iraq war' and 'alliance duty'. But why were German politicians so insistent on fulfilling their supposed duty, even when this contributed to the very war that they portrayed as deplorable and incompatible with Germany's identities? Let me remind that the central criticism of the German government was that it pursued a policy of 'isolation', departing from the cherished 'traditions' of multilateralism and Western integration. In its fantasmatic dimension, the accusation was that the government was pursuing a *Sonderweg* (which became equalised with the 'German way' slogan of the SPD), leading the country back to the horrific past. Close reading of the government discourse suggests that the *Sonderweg* fantasy played an important part here as well, one that supported the decisions constructed as 'alliance duty' towards the United States.

First of all, it is interesting how much German politicians were at pains to deny that there was a 'German way' in foreign policy at all, which is curious given all their talk of a 'self-confident' and 'grown-up' policy and the undisputed claim that Germany was entitled to sovereign decision-making. Schröder and Fischer rejected the accusation of *Sonderweg* and/or the notion of a 'German way' repeatedly (Schröder 2002d, Fischer in Deutscher Bundestag 2003d: 1885). Contradicting his previous statements, the chancellor argued that 'German way' never referred to foreign policy and was related solely to domestic affairs: "The whole attempt to construct a *Sonderweg* from this [...] is pure election campaign tactics, since I was simply not relating to foreign policy questions." (Schröder 2002d) Particularly remarkable, especially for the resolute and unequivocal denial of a 'German way' as well as the explicit link to the past, was Fischer's interview in *The Guardian*, which was subsequently discussed also in Germany's political debates and which deserves a lengthy citation:

In an outspoken interview with the Guardian, Mr Fischer scoffed at repeated claims by the chancellor during the election campaign that his opposition to a US-led attack on Iraq heralded a new 'German way' in international diplomacy. [...] Asked if there was room for a 'German way', Mr Fischer replied: 'No. That's nothing. Forget it. Forget about a German way.' [...] he was adamant in rejecting the nationalistic rhetoric in which Mr Schröder had wrapped his opposition to US policy. And he warned that such an approach could drag his country back into its disastrous past. 'I don't want to comment for the chancellor, but I tell you: forget it,' Mr Fischer said. 'There is definitely, in foreign policy, no German way as there is in domestic policy.' (Hooper 2002)

The repeated references to *Sonderweg* already signal a fantasmatic grip. However, what is even more interesting is the way the fantasy was used. The criticisms were rejected on the grounds that they did not apply to the situation, i.e. that Germany was not pursuing a *Sonderweg* in Iraq. What was left untouched or even reaffirmed was the structure and content of the fantasy; there indeed *was* the prospect of the horrific possibility of the return of the 'disastrous past' that had to be avoided at all costs. The construction of Germany as a loyal ally ready to fulfil her 'duty' and assist the United States without hesitation, which is difficult to understand at the level of the 'rational' argumentation (even the cited treaty obligations were highly dubious at best), thus makes much more sense when read against this fantasy: by staying with the Americans at least partially, Germany was avoiding a *Sonderweg*.<sup>41</sup>

Moving to the last of the four fantasies, was Germany's assistance to the war effort supported also by the fantasmatic desire to get rid of Saddam Hussein? The response cannot be a clear one, since the official language was ambiguous in this case. Saddam was often labelled a 'brutal dictator' (Fischer 2003e: 24) or a 'dreadful tyrant' (Fischer 2002h). There were 'no illusions' "about the inhuman brutal character of the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein" (Fischer 2003d: 3). Consequently, there was little opposition to the prospect of his toppling, which was even portrayed in a somewhat beatific fashion. Fischer was "not a vehement opponent of regime change. It is always exhilarating when a nation is liberated and a dictator overthrown." (Fischer 2003h) The foreign minister even constructed Saddam in

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<sup>41</sup> Memoirs support also this argument. Fischer is critical of Schröder's approach in early 2003, since it could lead to 'isolation', in which the 'tradition' of the Bonn Republic would be undone: "Germany could not afford such isolation, since this would question decades of the successful integration of Germany in the West and in Europe." (Fischer 2011: 204) Recalling his affective response, Struck recalls that the idea of potential 'isolation' brought a 'queasy feeling' (Struck 2010: 98). The approval of most of the US requests is articulated very similarly, suggesting the potentially dramatic consequences had Germany decided otherwise: "Had we refused all these points, our no to the Iraq war would become a no to the NATO-Alliance." (Fischer 2011: 224)

contrariety to 'the whole world': "If the brutal dictator Saddam got toppled by his people tomorrow, if he disappeared or went into exile, the whole world, the Iraqis in the first place, would be jolly glad." (Fischer 2003e: 24) Certain aspects of the fantasy were therefore reproduced also in the policy discourse.

At the same time, however, the way this fantasy was treated suggests a very limited degree of attachment to it. Depictions of Saddam as horrific and antagonistic were immediately qualified in the very texts from which I have cited in the previous paragraph. Yes, Saddam is 'brutal' and 'dreadful'. "Therefore an efficient policy of containment, sanctions and an effective military control of the no-fly zones has been enforced against Iraq since the Gulf War." (Fischer 2003d: 3) Yes, 'the whole world' would be 'jolly glad' if Saddam fell. "But the question is: Does this justify a war with all the risks, the humanitarian consequences, a regional destabilisation and terror? You have to weigh that." (Fischer 2003e: 24) Closure, which would be an indicator of the functioning of the logic of fantasy, is notably absent from these articulations. Saddam's continuing presence in power was certainly dreadful, but neither the obstacle that would threaten 'our' very identity, nor the only, ultimate or even most urgent problem. And there were certainly alternatives. As I have shown earlier, there were different 'priorities' (Schröder 2002d, Struck 2002a, Fischer 2003h). Toppling Saddam was attractive, but it was not accompanied by a scenario promising wholeness and the recapturing of a full enjoyment. The official constructions of Saddam thus lacked the affective pull of the *objet petit a*.

Germany's perplexing foreign policies in the Iraq crisis thus did not result only from contradictions on the level of routinised subject positions (social logics) and their linguistic reconstructions (political logics), but also on the level of desire. Multiple fantasies operated in the discourse, channelling affect to different 'objects', promising the impossible full enjoyment of a whole identity either by avoiding war, or by remaining a loyal ally. The structuration of the discourse confronted the subjects with a severe dilemma, since it appeared that the fulfilment of one beatific scenario, e.g. that of a peaceful and harmonious world, was directly threatening another one, e.g. that of Western unity. The puzzling mix of contradictory policies can thus be explained also as a result of competing fantasmatic desires. Crucially, these different fantasies all worked as "the support that gives consistency to what we call 'reality'" (Žižek 1989: 44). Apart from being a 'discursively disordered terrain' (Bach 1999: 176), Germany's political space was disordered also affectively. Subjects were split not only between different subject positions and political projects, but also between different fantasies that fuelled their identifications with the discursive resources provided by social and political logics.

## Conclusion

I started this chapter by saying that a discourse-based analysis of affects, more precisely their traces in fantasies, is a risky enterprise, but also one that can capture something that would otherwise be lost. Throughout the sections, I traced this ‘something’ by pointing out the fantasmatic constellations in different discursive arenas and interpreting them in terms of desire, affect and the real. This has enabled me to do two things. First, I have documented that discourses of the media and, to a lesser extent, of the parliamentary debates were rather rich in fantasies. A number of different narratives were provided, which all shared the key fantasmatic features: the scenario of an ideal and an obstacle that projects excessively horrific and beatific futures, transgressive or inappropriate aspects, and the provision of a foundational guarantee through discursive closure. Subjects interpellated by these fantasies were thus rallied behind various political projects by their affective identifications with ‘peace’ and against the ‘American war’, with the ‘tradition’ of the Bonn Republic and against the *Sonderweg* of Wilhelm II, or with the ‘international community’ and against ‘Saddam’. This explains the emotional and existential nature of the debates, since fantasies not only channel affect and translate it into discursively constructed emotions, but they also present the very core of our identity as at stake.

Second, I have also spelt out the relation between fantasy and foreign policy beyond seeing the former as merely contextual for the decisions regarding the latter. I have suggested that in fantasies, policy options are hinted as leading to the recapturing of the *objet petit a* and triggering the impossible full enjoyment of a complete identity. Focusing closely on the language of the politicians in charge of foreign policy, I have demonstrated the presence of fantasmatic elements in the official arena and interpreted the extent to which fantasies exercised their ‘grip’ over this discourse. This added a third layer to my explanation of foreign policy inconsistency, which thus resulted also from the simultaneous channelling of affect behind conflicting social logics and political projects. Therefore, the subjects could not simply resolve their dilemmas in favour of one or another logically consistent solution and either support the Iraq war vigorously, or stay out of it completely. Conflicting fantasies behind these identifications stabilised the ‘social reality’ of German identities and foreign policies so that abandoning some subject positions would have led to a dislocation of the sense of ‘who we are’. This affective economy underpinned the ‘rational’ argumentation about evidence, intelligence and the likely scenarios and was indeed manifest in the constant failures of the debate: in the end, there was little ‘rational’ discussion, since different camps were simply restating their respective positions.



While the inclusion of fantasies helps to ‘encircle the real’ and shows the interesting proliferation of seemingly inappropriate and peripheral narratives in the discourse, it is paramount not to overload the argument and to point also to its limits. First, fantasies and affect do not offer a deeper account than the previous two chapters, because the relation of discourse and affect is one of *mutual* influence. Similarly intertwined is also the relationship between the three parts of critical explanation. Fantasies support the reproduction of social logics by providing the affective support which makes subjects invested in routines and daily practices. On the other hand, fantasies need to draw upon the existing reservoir of signifiers, objects and practices in its construction of the *objet petit a*. With respect to political logics, fantasies provide the force behind hegemonic projects by channelling affect to particular signifiers. However, as the example of the ‘Saddam’ fantasy showed, the political effect of fantasies is limited by the presence of a political project that could take advantage of their force. Therefore, the affective force of fantasies does not determine the discursive form that is captured in social and political logics. Instead, it is one of the three equally important aspects of the ‘critical and articulated assemblage of logics’ (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 164) that constitutes my explanation.

Second, the importance awarded to fantasies should not lead to the impression that everything in the German discourse was fantasmatic. I have highlighted the somewhat marginal and peripheral nature of fantasies and the fact that they present the ‘obscene supplement’ to the ‘rational’ debates about the causes and consequences of the ‘Iraq crisis’. Indeed, arguments regarding the (non)existence of Iraqi WMD programmes, the salience of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, the extent of Iraq’s cooperation with the UN Security Council, the efficiency of inspections and sanctions, the likely cost of the war or the effects thereof on the struggle against terrorism were given much more space in the official and broader political arenas. My argument is rather that the importance of fantasies resides in the way how they help ‘resolve’ these ultimately undecidable debates. Fantasies cover the lack around which all arguments are structured. They conceal the ultimate uncertainty regarding all the questions above by giving a strongly affective response. Ultimately, we cannot really be certain whether Iraq is a threat, but because of fantasies we know for sure that ‘war’ must be opposed, that ‘isolation’ is not an option, or that ‘Saddam’ is evil. If Wittgenstein suggests that “[a]t the end of reasons comes *persuasion*” (Wittgenstein 1969: 611-612, in Mouffe 2000: 70, orig. emph.), my argument is that it is precisely this ‘end of reasons’ where desires, fantasies and affects play the strongest part in persuading us to identify with a particular discourse and pursue a certain policy.

## 10 | Conclusion

In the opening paragraphs of *Politics without Principle*, David Campbell recollects walking through the campus of an unspecified American university in the immediate aftermath of the Iraq war of 1991: “The weather was perfect, a carnival atmosphere was in the air – but I was left with a feeling of unease.” (Campbell 1993: 2) What Campbell found disturbing was the prevailing sense of normality, of having fun and carelessly enjoying the day, when contrasted with the suffering unleashed in Iraq. In Berlin, a quarter of century later, much seems to be similar. The weather is beautiful and the most important problem seems to be the performance of the German football team at the European Championship. However, unlike in Campbell’s example, the issues that are central in this thesis are not difficult to find right under the ostensibly carefree surface. The publication of the Chilcot Report in July 2016 has made Iraq a prime time issue once again. The events analysed in this dissertation are being discussed and used for current political purposes not only in the UK, but also in Germany and many other countries. Thirteen years after George W. Bush’s infamous ‘mission accomplished’ moment, the war still keeps haunting us. Two weeks before Chilcot’s presentation, Britain sent even stronger shockwaves across the continent by voting to leave the EU. The extent to which fear and hate dominated the campaign has put the issues of the ostensibly irrational ‘post-factual’ or ‘post-truth’ politics,<sup>42</sup> or, to use an appropriate German term, *Wutpolitik*, ‘politics of anger’, on the very top of Europe’s public debate. While Berliners are enjoying the sun, the problems discussed in this dissertation are not only present, but probably more relevant now than when I started writing it four years ago.

Throughout the text, I made a series of approaches to the problems of German foreign policy in the Iraq crisis. In the opening chapters, I relocated the issue into a broader theoretical context in order to address it from the perspective of an ontology that is both discursive and affective and an epistemology that is both explanatory and critical. I have offered a view of social reality that sees it as simultaneously structured and patterned, as well as incomplete and unstable. What we call ‘social reality’ is constantly in the process of becoming through the circulation and inter-tangling of discourses and affects. Social reality results from contextual articulations, which makes it radically contingent and unavoidably political. It is constantly being reproduced in the recurrent tension between stability and repetition on the one hand, and movement and change on the other hand. Foreign policy is a practice through

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<sup>42</sup> These terms are, indeed, extremely problematic in their implied belief in the self-evident nature of facts and truth respectively and in their invoking of the fantasy of the supposed good old days when politics was factual/truthful. I neither accept nor endorse these labels, but merely use them to highlight how the affective dimension of politics is being increasingly discussed in the public sphere.

which states, as discursive constructs assembled from disparate individuals, institutions, practices and objects, act upon other actors in the international environment. At the same time, through practices of foreign policy, the states themselves and the very environment within which they operate is being reproduced and altered.

This approach allowed me to suggest an agenda for foreign policy in the form of five problems we should focus on: the different practices of foreign policies in particular contexts, the structural patterns and sedimented rules upon which they rely, the way how foreign policy decisions are constructed and written into a particular description of the situation in question, the affective investments that underpins these processes and the ethical and normative problems associated with foreign policies. These aspects also overlap with different steps in the process of a critical explanation, which forms the epistemological backbone of this thesis. After discussing methodological issues, I constructed my research problem as the interplay of inconsistent policies with existential and affective discourses. This presented the explanandum of the thesis, a ‘real world’ problem that is both analytically puzzling and politically pertinent. In the final three chapters, I approached the issue with the help of three sets of logics – social, political and fantasmatic – that roughly correspond to the analysis of sedimentation, symbolic construction and affect. The picture that emerged is arguably a richer one than in soft-constructivist works on German foreign policy and poststructuralist foreign policy analyses, as it brings these three different dimensions of discourse analysis together.

Conclusions regarding Germany’s foreign policy in the Iraq crisis could first be summarised in the problem of disordered discursive environment. Policymakers had to struggle with potentially conflicting social logics, which all constituted the ‘common sense’ of Germany’s foreign policy. The sedimented and therefore somewhat instinctive efforts to promote peaceful solutions clashed with the equally depoliticised and routinised rules according to which Germany cherished the international community. These were difficult to reconcile as long as the international community’s most powerful member was pushing for war, a move that dislocated the previous hegemonic constellation of social logics. This set in motion the symbolic construction of the meaning of the crisis, of the appropriate application of social logics and of Germany’s position in the situation. Given the inherent ambiguity of key signifiers like ‘war’, ‘peace’, ‘alliance’ and ‘multilateralism’, very different political projects could be constructed from resources provided by the very same social logics. For some, the crisis was about America’s aggression, which had to be opposed in the name of peace. For others, it was about the chancellor’s opportunism that excluded the Federal Republic from the international community and had to be challenged in the name of the Western community. No single interpretation managed to hegemonise the discourse, implying that

there was no shared ‘common sense’ of what the crisis was about and no course of action was singled out as the only legitimate, good and even natural policy.

However, my argument goes beyond the observation that Germany’s discursive terrain was a disordered one. The cacophonous nature of discourse with its multiple social logics and political projects shows us that no policy options appeared natural or self-evident and that policymakers were confronted with difficult choices. However, is politics not always about choices? Are politicians – or all of us, for that matter – not deciding between different possibilities every single day? To understand *why* these choices were so difficult that, in the end, German politicians did not manage to opt for one clear-cut option over another, I have introduced a Lacanian perspective on the subject, affectivity and decision.

First of all, the incapability to choose between different discursive constructions and the resulting pursuit of contradictory policies can be explained by the relationship between the subject and discourse. I have presented a radically social conception of the subject, in which the subject is constructed as such only within the symbolic order of discourse. There is no dualism between the subject and her social environment. Instead, the subject is part and parcel of the discourse within which she becomes herself by adopting social identities (subject positions) and which she, in turn, reproduces through her practices. Both the subject and her social environment are constituted through the same circulation of discourse and affect, whose contingent articulations try to cover over the ontological lack around which society is structured. Therefore, if discourse is disordered, like in the German case, this disordering will affect also the subject, provided she identifies with these different resources simultaneously. I have shown that this was the case for most participants of the German debate on Iraq. Therefore, the situation was not about coherent subjects deciding between options without any effect on their identities, but rather about split subjects negotiating different resources – like the commitments to peace and alliance – that were *all* constitutive of their identities. The dislocation of discourse resulted also in the dislocation of the subjects in question. The agony of decision-making and the attempts to negotiate contradictory options can thus be read as resulting from an identity crisis, in which Germany’s policymakers were being pulled in different directions at the same time. Since all of these conflicting imperatives were seen as part of ‘who we are’, it was extremely difficult to abandon some of them in favour of others.

Affect plays an important role in this relationship between the subject, discourse and identity. If the subject was merely an assemblage of different discursive subject positions, as structuralists and some poststructuralist argue, there would be no reason why contradictions should trigger a crisis. Such a defragmented subject could easily and playfully oscillate

between different subject positions, abandoning some of them and adopting new ones at ease. Instead, as I have shown in detail, we are attached to some subject positions affectively, since these promise the (impossible) fulfilment of our ontological desire for a whole and complete identity. Our sense of self is dependent on particular signifiers or practices that are constitutive of these subject positions, since they promise to reunite us with the 'missing object' (*objet petit a*). Through the recapturing of this 'object of desire', we are supposed to reach the enjoyment of a full identity, of 'becoming ourselves'.

I have shown that the affective attachment to discursive resources (subject positions, signifiers, practices) is mediated through fantasies, which provide us with scenarios of reuniting with the object of our desire. The problem is that there can be multiple, potentially contradictory fantasies, which was clearly visible in the German discourse on Iraq. According to one prominent fantasy, it would be only by resisting the war that Germany could save/recapture her peaceful and civilised identity. In another fantasy, it was rather by staying with the Americans that Germans could secure their Western identity and avoid the looming return of the horrific past of nationalism, militarism, war and genocide. In yet another fantasy, the maintenance of a civilised and cosmopolitan identity required the removal of Saddam Hussein, portrayed as an Oriental despot enjoying himself in his cruelty and at the expense of the people of Iraq. These fantasies channelled affect towards different signifiers and practices, pushing the subjects to identify with contradictory subject positions, social logics and political projects. Therefore, the inconsistent policies resulted not only from the discursive, but also from the affective disordering of the subject. The subjects in charge of German foreign policy wanted to be too many things at the same time. They wanted to have their cake and eat it – and they could not help themselves wanting both.

The discussion of subjectivity also helps us show that the problems of inconsistent policies and affective and existential discourses are closely related. As long as we abandon the assumption of a coherent actor and think the subject as split both within discourse and between her discursive and affective sides, the apparently paradoxical becomes logical. The moment of dislocation confronts the subjects with the experience of the radical contingency of their own identities, for example by plotting different subject positions against one another like in the German case. Given the intimate relationship between policy and identity, questions regarding 'what we (should) do' are simultaneously always also the very existential questions of 'who we are', since identity is reproduced and altered precisely through the practices of foreign policy. As long as identity is strictly correlative with our ontological desire for it (a desire which also promises the full enjoyment of 'becoming ourselves'), foreign policy – as an identity-reaffirming practice – is also affective. Through

foreign policies, the subjects try to cover over the ontological lack at their heart in the (false) hope to satisfy their desire for the full enjoyment of a whole and stable identity.

In situations like the Iraq crisis, the subjects are torn between conflicting desires for contradictory identities (nation state, international community, the peaceful 'we' etc.). Since foreign policies are the tools through which we 'chase' these identities and hope to satisfy these desires, policy inconsistency is a rather understandable result of the splitting of the subject. However, at the same time, it is also a reminder of the ongoing failure to achieve a coherent identity. How can we claim to be a peaceful nation, when we are tacitly supporting the war? How can we claim to be a multilateralist country, when we are putting ourselves outside of the international community? How can we claim to be civilised and cosmopolitan, when we allow the Oriental despot to continue with his abhorrent cruelties? While the existential and affective nature of discourse pushes the subject to act inconsistently in a situation when she identifies with incommensurable subject positions, it also works the other way round: inconsistency invites existentiality and affectivity, as the contradictions between different courses of action perpetuate the experience of the ontological lack as manifested in the sense that 'this is not who we are'. Multiplicity of constitutive principles with which the subject identifies – like Germany's simultaneous and strongly affectively-laden insistence on anti-militarism and multilateralism – thus further amplifies the affective economy of the perpetual movement between desire and its ultimate disappointment, which, in the Lacanian view, is at the heart of the dynamics of social life.

The predicament of the discursively and affectively disordered terrain of German foreign policy, however, means neither that all thinkable decisions were possible, nor that the only possible decisions were those taken by the Schröder government. The former attitude would neglect the structural constraints that are written on the subject already in the process of her discursive constitution, while the latter would deny the subject any degree of agency. Instead, I have outlined a theory of decision that stems from the gap between the subject and the always incomplete and undecidable discursive structure. Decisions have different aspects to them. First, it is the proverbial 'madness' as known from Derrida's discussion of Kierkegaard; the unpredictability and arbitrariness of decisions stemming from the radically contingent nature of social relations. This does not mean that Germany could have taken *all* possible actions we can imagine, since the decisions were taken from within a particular sedimented constellation of the domestic and international orders. For example, it is hardly thinkable that the Bundeswehr would forcefully take over the US bases in Germany in order to prevent the Iraq war, or, to use a polar opposite case, that the German government would promote the use of nuclear weapons to get rid of Saddam Hussein. Rather than that, the madness of decision means that at every single moment, *some* other options were possible

and feasible, e.g. staying neutral or cautiously supportive of the war in public, cooperating so as to legalise the invasion in the United Nations etc. No decision is thus wholly explainable by factors exceeding it, be it social logics, political projects or fantasies. On the contrary, there is a disruptive excess in every decision that cannot be explained by anything but itself – the political moment of radical subjectivity.

At the same time, the madness of decision is always a regulated one (Laclau 1996a). While the political and unpredictable moment of decisions cannot be explained away, it can be encircled by pointing to the discursive resources into which it was written. In this vein, I have shown how Germany's foreign policies were enabled and limited by the hegemonic constellation of the three social logics of state sovereignty, peaceful resolution and international communities. These three logics provided the building blocks from which policies had to be assembled in order to get social acceptance. Radical challenge to these three social logics was possible in principle. However, no fundamentally different logics were constructed in the discourse. The only challenge was discernible in articulations that privileged one logic over another, e.g. in the right-wing highlighting of sovereignty and the left-wing privileging of peace. These outliers were disciplined by the mainstream and did not acquire a strong voice within the debate. Consequently, the political projects constructed in the wake of the dislocation all operated within the rather narrow confines of these three social logics. The madness of the decision was thus happening within the constraints of the discursive resources that were constitutive of Germany's political identities and to which the subjects in charge of foreign policy were affectively attached via fantasies.

By answering one question, like the interplay between emotionality, existentiality and inconsistency in the context of German foreign policy that was dealt with in this dissertation, other problems are immediately opened. In the remainder, I will highlight what I see as the most important questions reaching beyond the scope of the present project by discussing the limits of my argument and suggesting avenues for its further development.

The first and most obvious limit of the thesis is empirical. While the analysis of the Iraq case is grounded in extensive empirical research, some of the more general claims deserve additional supporting evidence. On the level of German foreign policy, this relates above all to my construction of the different social logics and fantasies. Genealogical studies would illuminate the contingent emergence of these discursive patterns, their contestation, sedimentation and transformation in time. Comparisons with other cases – above all other intervention debates like Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya or Syria – would clarify the variation, spread and status of these social logics and fantasies. On the level of foreign policy analysis, it is above all the hypothesis that current international order is structured by the three social

logics of state sovereignty, peaceful resolution and international communities that needs more probing. It is only by examining foreign policies in other spatiotemporal contexts that we would know whether these logics are present only within the post-Cold War Western community, what other logics it would make sense to construct, or, indeed, whether this argument is relevant beyond the German case at all. While I have indeed not offered a set of testable and mechanically applicable propositions, it would clearly be beneficial to utilise the approach in other cases that share a family resemblance with the problems discussed in this dissertation. It is precisely for this purpose that I have spent so much time defining foreign policy and formalising the agenda for its further analysis.

Second, there is a tension between the theorisation of foreign policy as a practice that is not attached solely to the state (as it can reproduce also other subjects like the EU, the international community, the peaceful ‘we’ etc.) and the empirical focus on the discourses from within one particular state. Is this not inviting the reification of the state through the empirical backdoor?<sup>43</sup> Admittedly, this paradox is present in the thesis. As I have made clear, I certainly do not see foreign policy as a membrane separating the domestic from the international. On the contrary, ‘international’ and ‘domestic’ discourses are intertextually intertwined. Consequently, foreign policies are influenced also by discourses that are beyond the confines of the nation state. Therefore, it is desirable to reflect also on these discourses and examine them together with those of the domestic arena, discuss their mutual influence, their compatibilities and contradictions as well as the travel of signifiers and practices between them. This could not have been done here for the reasons of limited space and time. Therefore, it constitutes an important agenda for further research. I believe that the logics framework is particularly well-suited to address this problem, as the approach does not start from the subject, but rather from the discourses within which the subjects are constituted, whoever these subjects are and wherever these discourses may be located.

Third, a large field of possibilities opens around my treatment of discourse. I have shown that the conceptualisation of discourse as a relational complex of signifiers, practices and objects, which is intertwined with and underpinned by affective investment, is applicable also for the ‘macro’ issues of foreign policy in particular and international politics in general. I have also argued that, despite the recent turns to objects, materiality, corporeality or the everyday, the predominantly – if by no means exclusively – linguistic issues of constructing and deciding a military interventions still constitute a relevant problem. What should be pursued further is a more explicit engagement with related literatures in IR and social research. The Essex School’s broad conception of discourse bears resemblance to the

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<sup>43</sup> Jennifer Milliken (1999) makes exactly the same argument against the defining works of David Campbell and Cynthia Weber.



Foucauldian and Deleuzian notions of *dispositif* and *assemblage*, which are central for the ‘new materialists’. The importance of practice for my account brings the potential of a fruitful exchange with the ‘practice turn’. The notions of subject positions, discursive relations and hegemonies invite a debate with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which could contribute also with its elaborate linguistic and visual methodologies. In all of these conversations, intellectual synergies could be found, hopefully leading to mutual inspiration and productive articulations that would bridge the often jealously cherished minor differences.

Fourth, further arguments should be developed and conversations started around the concept of affect. I have demonstrated how affectivity matters in foreign policy. This is a move that is undeveloped or rejected by most existing accounts. However, a body of work is already emerging around the questions of emotions, passions, affects and desires in world politics, taking inspiration from various strands of psychology, philosophy and even neuroscience. Again, the potential for convergences is immense. Freud’s legacy offers one particularly promising platform, as it not only provides a shared reference point for critical theorists of different tribes (e.g. Frankfurt School, Lacanians, Deleuzians), but some of the core psychoanalytical ideas are even finding their parallels in recent advances in neuroscience (Schwartz 2015, Vernon 2015). One issue that needs to be discussed and clarified is the notion of repression, which is criticised by the Deleuzians and which I brought to my framework through the argument that fantasies present the unacknowledged and marginalised supplement to the ostensibly rational argumentation. Does it hold for the current situation, when anti-Semite, xenophobic and racist comments are increasingly present in the language of mainstream politicians? I would still argue the affirmative, since it does not mean that such language has become any less transgressive only because it is more common. In fact, when resorting to such ‘plain speaking’, politicians themselves are keen to highlight that they act against the supposed prohibitions of ‘political correctness’. Arguably, it is less the content and more the ‘breaking of the rules’ that engages the subjects on the level of desire. Nevertheless, it is clear that much more theoretical and empirical work is needed.

Last but not least, there are limits to the political argument. My critical intervention consisted of a number of steps, which were taken throughout the different chapters. By highlighting the contradictory nature of Germany’s policies, I have challenged the smooth narratives that prevail in the public discussion. By pointing out to the ontological lack and the ‘madness’ aspect of decision-making, I have shown that the decisions taken were not necessary or natural, but that they always entailed the arbitrary and ultimately political moment of choice. I have also demonstrated how this moment was being obscured by the

invocation of norms, rules, principles or traditions, which is precisely what was politically 'wrong' about the German debate. Crucially, I have outlined the function of affect in this process, showing how desire and enjoyment were manipulated through fantasies so as to bind subjects to social orders. The common denominator of all these steps is the ethical imperative of resisting discursive closure, as closure always entails the exclusion and repression of alternative politics, subjectivities and futures. In this commitment, the Lacanian perspective aligns with the broader poststructuralist scholarship, in particular the Derridean ethics of undecidability (Edkins 1999, Glynn 2000). What it adds is the explicit focus on the affective dimension.

I have shown the functioning of power via discourse and fantasy and demonstrated its problematic aspects, so that it becomes possible for us to challenge and resist it. However, there are two important things that I have not done. First, in analysing foreign policy practices and predominantly elite discourses, my focus has been largely on the side of power and only very little on the side of resistance. Second, just like most critical studies in IR, my intervention stops with pointing out to the problems, but I do not offer a guidance on how exactly an alternative politics of the Iraq crisis should have looked like. These are arbitrary choices, which were driven by my interest in the functioning of power in some of the more traditional venues and arenas. They are legitimate from the perspective of the research question, but they clearly limit what could have been said in this thesis. Future studies should focus on the ostensibly marginal discourses of social movements, popular culture or social networks, in order to show how official discourses are being resisted and whether this has any effect on foreign policies. Also, there is the urgent need to develop a positive ethical agenda for foreign policy. This dissertation has made the Lacanian claim that we should not give way to our desire. However, much more needs to be said about what this means for the conduct of foreign policy in particular contexts.

## Appendix | Data selection

I have argued that the definition of research objects – like foreign policy – always overlaps with their project-specific operationalisation. Following the logic of articulation, theoretical concepts and arguments are always contaminated by the empirical contexts from within which they are constructed. To take my struggle for transparency one step further, the following pages outline my empirical archive and reveal the choices made during the research process. The explanatory work has already been done in Chapter 5, where I have argued for a notion of method that is performative rather than representative and highlighted that doing research always involves the taking of contingent and ultimately problematic decisions. The following paragraphs complement this with a detailed description of what exactly this meant in this dissertation. While the use of numbers and the description of procedures for selecting data gives the text a certain ‘objectivist’ flavour, it should be clear that the archive could have been constructed and narrowed in many different ways. Therefore, the following pages do not defend my choices as the only possible or the best available. Rather than that, they are an attempt to let the reader look in my cards to answer some of the questions that I was – usually to no avail – asking myself when reading other discursive studies of foreign policy. The point of the exercise is thus not to impose closure on my methodological proceedings, but to open their inner logic to the reader in order to provide her with additional information for her own exercise of judgement about the conclusions reached in this thesis.

### Texts

As argued in Chapter 5, the texts – in the narrower sense of written linguistic documents – used in this dissertation were gathered from three discursive sites, which I have called the official, wider political and media arenas.

The *official arena* was operationalised in terms of speeches, statements and interviews of the members of the executive, mostly members of the cabinet. The key source for collecting them was the security policy bulletin *Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik*, which is available online and covers public appearances of leading politicians and officials. In 2002-2003, it was published by the Federal Press and Information Office on a monthly basis. The advantage of this source is its easy accessibility and comprehensiveness of the collection. The fact that it is collected and sorted by government officials makes it particularly interesting, as it demonstrates what was considered important by the government itself. However, it makes it also problematic and in need of cross-checking for missing documents.

This triangulation was done with the help of *deutsche-aussenpolitik.de*, an independent online archive of documents and literature on German foreign policy, which was administrated by the University of Trier and freely available until the end of 2015. Unfortunately, it is defunct now. The exclusive nature of the official arena means that the volume of texts produced within the timeframe was limited and therefore, no preselection was needed as all the texts relating to Iraq that were captured in the *Stichworte* and through the *deutsche-aussenpolitik.de* could be read or at least skimmed through in the first reading. 73 texts were then annotated and subjected to a further analysis in the second reading.

*Wider political arena* was defined as parliamentary debates, which were collected from the website of the German Bundestag. All protocols within the given timeframe were searched for the sign 'irak' for the purpose of a reasonable pre-selection. Disregarding the debates with single-digit occurrences, 14 debates were subjected to the first reading, of which 87 speeches were annotated for a further analysis. A smaller amount of rather unsystematically selected additional materials (parliamentary motions, policy papers, press statements, public appearances) that fit within broader discourses of the political elite were read in the process of preparing for the interviews. As long as they provided novel or interesting articulations, these were also incorporated as supplementary resources.

To operationalise the *media arena*, I have selected four outlets: *SZ*, *FAZ*, *BILD* and *Der Spiegel*. While the choice of these papers has been justified in Chapter 5, the equally pressing problem of selecting texts from the enormous volume of material published over the period of analysis has yet to be dealt with. The issue of preselection is central here, since reading the material in its entirety is impossible. *SZ* and *FAZ* operate paid online archive databases, which can be searched rather comfortably. In the case of *SZ*, I relied on the pre-sorted dossier on 'German position on the second US war in Iraq' ('Deutsche Haltung zum zweiten US-Irak-Krieg'), which contained 215 articles within my timeframe. The *FAZ* database does not offer dossiers, so I entered 'irak' and filtered the results by narrowing the search to the proximity of the article title and applying the tags 'foreign policy' ('Aussenpolitik') and 'Germany' ('Deutschland'). This resulted in 222 returns. However, I did not satisfy myself merely with this mechanical process. All the articles were downloaded as pdf files of the whole print pages in which they were embedded. Besides incorporating visual aspects and at least some elements of contextuality, this also included an uncounted number of other articles that were printed on the same pages. Some of these articles were also read as long as they appeared relevant. In a nutshell, while the core strategy of data selection remained rather deductive-quantitative in the case of *SZ* and *FAZ*, some elements of the 'look and see' approach were included in order to negotiate the borders of the archive.

Of these approximately 500 texts that were read or at least skimmed through, 79 from *SZ* and 44 from *FAZ* were annotated for a further analysis.

The process was very different with the other two outlets. *BILD* launched its online database only with effect from 2012, whilst the archive of *Der Spiegel* is freely available online, yet without an advanced search option. Therefore, both had to be browsed in an old-fashioned manual way, spending days with the dusty volumes and photographing the relevant articles, eventually resulting in hundreds of scanned pages of rough material. In the end, 66 pieces from *BILD* and 41 articles from *Der Spiegel* were annotated and further analysed in the second reading. While the collection was certainly a lengthy and demanding enterprise, it also contributed to my learning curve with respect to the broader context of the two crises. To put it simply, by looking at the pages and reading the headlines, I got a broad idea which other topics and events were moving the media discourse in 2002/2003. While this contextual knowledge is difficult to spell out, it certainly played its role in influencing my judgment and, above all, understanding the positioning of the intervention debates within broader discourses.

The exact amount of texts read or skimmed through in the first reading is impossible to establish, since only the relevant ones were annotated, but my best guess would see it somewhere in the region of 1000. However, more importantly, the previous paragraphs provide a reasonably clear picture regarding the second reading, which was more formal and methodical. This resource base consisted of approximately 400 texts from the official, broader political and media arenas.

## **Interviews**

In selecting interviewees, I approached primarily the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag from the years of 2002 and 2003, plus a few other candidates selected upon recommendations from previous interviews ('snowball sampling'). Altogether, this led to the pool of 84 potential respondents. After excluding parliamentarians that were not likely to be accessible (e.g. because of occupying high offices at the time of writing or having retired and living far from Berlin), I approached 27 people with a written request. Approximately one half of them were contacted directly, mostly through publicly available e-mail addresses, while the other half was approached via personal contacts developed during the fieldwork. In the end, I conducted 10 interviews, including multiple foreign policy speakers of the different parties, which assured high quality of the interviewees. I have managed to speak to representatives of all parliamentary groups, with at least one person from each faction (SPD – 4, CDU/CSU – 2, Greens – 2, FDP – 1, PDS – 1). Apart from that, I conducted a smaller number of interviews with foreign policy experts,

which were not used in the discourse analysis, yet helped me in developing my background knowledge.

## Visuals

Three different types of visuals were used. The selection of (1) *cover pages* of *Der Spiegel* was easy, as I simply included all of them relating to Iraq within my timeframe, totalling eight covers. The case with (2) *caricatures* was similarly straightforward: I included all of those dealing with Iraq that appeared in my sample of the *FAZ* and *SZ* pages that was retrieved from the databases, which meant 11 from *FAZ* and 19 from *SZ*. However, the situation was very different with (3) *photographs*. Clearly, there were hundreds of them that would qualify as relevant throughout my sample of the media arena. I was indeed exposed to photographs quite extensively while browsing and reading the texts, however, chiefly because of the complementary nature of visuals for the dissertation, I decided to include a relatively small amount of them for a formal analysis, totalling at the number of 29 (*SZ* – 8, *FAZ* – 2, *BILD* – 5, *Der Spiegel* – 14). The selection of these photographs is one of the moments, where I can provide only very rough account and no hard criteria, as I was guided by my judgement and even intuition. I chose the images which I thought condensed and embodied best the overall tone of the visual coverage, focusing on some of the typical and repetitive elements.

As explained in Chapter 5, my visual analysis combined the narrative element of taking spontaneous notes with the more formal aspect of inductive coding. The following table summarises the key co-occurrences of codes for predicates and identities, with numbers considered significant highlighted in bold. Other codes than mentioned in the table were irrelevant, as they occurred only once or twice in my small sample. The table does not provide any sort of justification according to quantitative, let alone statistical criteria. This is not my aspiration here. Instead, I am using it only as another way of representing my own interpretive analysis of the visuals that were included in my sample.

	photographs	caricatures	covers
<b>BUSH</b>	8	4	3
& WEAPON/S	3	2	1
& SOLDIER/S	6	1	1
<b>USA</b>	5	16	4
& WEAPON/S	5	7	3
& SOLDIER/S	5	7	2
<b>SADDAM</b>	10	6	1
& WEAPON/S	8	2	1
& SOLDIER/S	8	4	1
& ENJOYMENT	N/A	5	N/A
<b>SCHRÖDER</b>	1	11	1
& WEAPON/S	0	3	0
& SOLDIER/S	0	2	0
& ENJOYMENT	N/A	5	N/A

*Coding of visuals*

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6. Party of Democratic Socialism, Berlin, 19 December 2014.
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